

# The protection of children in England: action plan

The Government's response  
to Lord Laming







# Department for Children, Schools and Families

## **The Protection of Children in England: action plan The Government's response to Lord Laming**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families  
by Command of Her Majesty

May 2009

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# Contents

Ministerial Foreword	1
The Government's Response	3
Action Plan	29



# Ministerial Foreword



Every child should be safe. Sadly, not every child is. Shockingly, some children are at risk of harm from the very people they should be able to rely on for love and care. We all have a responsibility to do everything possible to protect those vulnerable children.

This country has one of the best child protection systems in the world. Every day, thousands of people at the front line – social workers, teachers, police officers, doctors, nurses and many others – work tirelessly to support children and young people and help keep them safe. But good practice is not yet standard practice everywhere – and we should not rest until it is.

That is why, last November, I asked Lord Laming to prepare an urgent, independent report of progress on safeguarding arrangements nationally. His report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, was published on 12 March. The Government welcomed Lord Laming's report and responded immediately, accepting all his recommendations and taking urgent action.

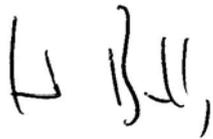
Lord Laming's report confirmed that robust legislative, structural and policy foundations are in place and that our Every Child Matters reforms set the right direction and are widely supported. He underlined the progress that has been made and the positive difference that people working with children, particularly those most at risk, are making every day. But he was also clear that there needs to be "*a step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm*". He challenged us all – central government, local government, national and local partners, and the public – to do more.

Lord Laming's report set out a compelling analysis and a comprehensive set of recommendations to ensure best practice is universally applied in every area of the country, to strengthen national and local leadership and accountability, and to provide more support to local leaders and for the frontline workforce. We have already begun to act on his recommendations. We have appointed Sir Roger Singleton as the first ever Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children to advise

Government on strategic priorities and the effective implementation of safeguarding policy. We have taken immediate action to start to transform the social work profession. We are clarifying and strengthening the key role of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. And we are establishing a new National Safeguarding Delivery Unit to ensure a co-ordinated approach across Government and to support and challenge Children's Trusts and local authorities to drive up standards and the quality of practice.

This document sets out the Government's detailed response to Lord Laming's report and our plan of action to deliver the step change which he has called for. It is an action plan to which I and my colleagues across Government are firmly committed but one which we know we cannot deliver alone. Keeping children and young people safe must be the responsibility, every single day, of us all.

Nothing we can do will bring back the children who have died at the hands of their abusers or relieve the suffering of those children who have been deliberately harmed. But we have to be determined to learn the lessons and to act now to make a lasting difference so that more children will be protected in future.



**Ed Balls**

**Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and Chair, Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People**

# The Government's Response

## Introduction

1. Ministers announced to Parliament on 12 November 2008 that they had asked Lord Laming to prepare an independent report of progress being made nationally in the delivery of arrangements to protect children, and to identify any barriers to effective, consistent implementation and how these might be overcome<sup>1</sup>.
2. On 12 March 2009, Lord Laming's report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*<sup>2</sup> was published. The Government published an immediate response to Lord Laming's report on the same day<sup>3</sup>: we accepted all his recommendations, announced some immediate actions, and committed to developing a more detailed response and action plan to drive forward implementation.
3. In his report Lord Laming confirmed that robust legislative, structural and policy foundations are in place and that Every Child Matters "*clearly has the support of professionals, across all of the services, who work with children and young people*" and provides "*a sound framework for professionals to protect children and promote their welfare*". He reported that "*a great deal of progress has been made*" and highlighted the positive difference that people at the front line are making to children – "*Every day, thousands of children are helped, supported and in some cases have their lives saved by these staff*".
4. But he was also clear that more needs to be done – "*There now needs to be a step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm*". He challenged national Government to "*inject greater energy and drive into the implementation of change and support local improvement*" and leaders of

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1 Ed Balls' letter of 17 November 2008 to Lord Laming commissioning a progress report on safeguarding available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming)

2 *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, The Lord Laming, March 2009

3 The Government's interim response to Lord Laming's *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report* available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming) published on 12 March 2009

local services to “translate policy, legislation and guidance into day-to-day practice on the frontline of every service”.

“It would be unreasonable to expect that the sudden and unpredictable outburst by an adult towards a child can be prevented. But that is entirely different from the failure to protect a child or young person already identified as being in danger of deliberate harm. The death of a child in these circumstances is a reproach to us all.”

“It is essential that action is now taken so that as far as humanly possible children at risk of harm are properly protected.”

**The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report**

5. Lord Laming’s report provided an invaluable assessment and set us all – central government, local government, national and local partners, local communities and the general public – important challenges. No organisation, national or local, no individual is exempt from his findings or his call to action. The safety of children is the responsibility of us all and we all have a responsibility to ask ourselves what more we can do to protect vulnerable children.
6. Crucially, Lord Laming has stressed the importance of placing the child at the centre of all that we do. That means understanding the perspective of the child, listening to the child and never losing sight of the child. Just as the centrality of the child drives our policies so too should it drive day-to-day practice at the front line.
7. Our Children’s Plan<sup>4</sup> sets the ambition of making this country the best place for children to grow up. And the Government is determined to do everything possible to make the arrangements in this country for protecting children the best in the world. Because nothing less will do.

## The challenge

8. Lord Laming’s report confirmed that we have in place robust legislative, structural and policy foundations on which to build and that there is a widespread consensus that our Every Child Matters reforms set the right direction. His report illustrates the positive progress which has been made:

every day, across the country, people working with children are doing their best to do the right thing, and make the right decisions, to keep children and young people safe. They have tough jobs, often working in very difficult circumstances, and deserve the full backing of Government, professionals working in other areas and the public. Child protection is even more complex and challenging today than it was in previous generations.

9. But we must move further, faster. It is up to us, as Government, and to local authorities, together with all their local partner organisations, to provide strong national and local leadership to drive implementation forward with the pace and sustained commitment needed to make a rapid, and lasting, difference to our most vulnerable children and improve confidence in the system.
10. What will make that difference? Having the right legislation, policies, systems and structures does matter. But they are not enough. What matters most to children, young people and families is the day-to-day support they receive from services. Above all, we need consistently high quality practice, working to high quality standards, firmly focused on what will make a real difference to children's lives.
11. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. That is no empty slogan. In reality, it makes all the difference – whether the parent cares well for their child and protects them from people who might wish to harm them; whether the social worker, or the teacher, or the police officer, or the GP acts on signs of abuse rather than hoping for the best; whether the family friend or neighbour looks out for others' children and isn't afraid of reporting abuse or neglect where they suspect it. Hindsight or regret – "I thought there was something wrong but I ..." or "If only we had..." – will not save children's lives or protect them from harm. Identifying problems early and intervening in the right way and at the right time can. No Government or local authority can do this alone and assuming that they can will not help vulnerable children.
12. That is why this document focuses on individual and collective action. It challenges us all and is relevant to everyone.

## National leadership and accountability

13. Lord Laming's report rightly underlines the crucial importance of strong leadership nationally and locally with clear accountabilities and effective working between children's services, police, health and other agencies involved in the safety of children. We agree that there needs to be "*a sustained commitment to child protection and promoting the welfare of children at every level of government and in every one of the local services*".

## Stronger, central guidance

14. One of the fundamental roles of central Government is to set clear expectations in legislation and guidance. The Government will revise the core statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*<sup>5</sup>, to take account of Lord Laming's recommendations to strengthen policy and practice, and to place a stronger focus on the perspective of the child, by the end of 2009. This will make it absolutely clear to every agency and practitioner in children's services, police, health and other sectors, what they need to do to keep children safe. We will consult widely before issuing draft guidance for formal consultation this autumn.
15. Lord Laming made important recommendations on how we can strengthen policy and practice in relation to Serious Case Reviews which play such a crucial role in learning lessons and supporting improvement locally. This will inform the revision of Chapter 8 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* which the Government plans to publish separately for consultation by July 2009 so that these important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible. Ofsted have also confirmed that they will revise the evaluation framework for Serious Case Reviews to strengthen the focus on learning.

## Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children

16. 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 strategic priorities and the effective implementation of policy and report annually to Parliament on safeguarding progress, including the delivery of the recommendations from Lord Laming's report.

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<sup>5</sup> *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, HM Government, April 2006

17. Sir Roger took up this new role, which is a three year appointment, on 1 April 2009. His immediate priorities have been to advise on:
- the development of this Action Plan
  - the remit of the new National Safeguarding Delivery Unit and its mode of operation
- Sir Roger wrote<sup>6</sup> to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families on 5 May, setting out his early priorities. Sir Roger will submit his first annual report to Parliament in April 2010.
18. To assist him in his new role, Sir Roger is establishing a new **Chief Adviser's Expert Group**. The membership of that Group will be:
- Colin Green, Association of Directors of Children's Services  
 Moira Gibb, Chair Social Work Task Force and Chief Executive, Camden  
 Christine Davies, Chief Executive, C4EO  
 Jim Gamble, Association of Chief Police Officers and Chief Executive, CEOP  
 Jo Webber, Deputy Policy Director, NHS Confederation  
 Roger Shippam, Director (Children), Ofsted  
 Andrew Flanagan, Chief Executive, NSPCC  
 Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive, Cafcass
- A judge of the High Court-Family Division will also be invited to join the group.
19. The Chief Adviser will be independent of Government. In addition to advising Ministers on the implementation of safeguarding policy, the Chief Adviser will have a particular responsibility to influence and monitor the co-ordination of central government department policies and approaches towards safeguarding and to assess the extent to which the advice and guidance issued by professional bodies contributes towards effective multi-disciplinary working at the front line. The Chief Adviser will be alert to the emergence of particularly effective approaches, fresh ideas and new thinking. He will also pay close attention to the effective implementation of Lord Laming's recommendations which were addressed to central government and contribute to improved public and professional understanding of safeguarding vulnerable children.

### National Safeguarding Delivery Unit

20. The Chief Adviser will advise Government on the establishment of a cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU) to give strong, co-ordinated national leadership across the system.

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Sir Roger Singleton to Ed Balls of 5 May available at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming)

21. 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 and young people for all the relevant frontline services.
22. Regional Government Office staff will work as part of the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit providing:
  - support and challenge to LSCBs on Serious Case Reviews, including maintaining oversight of the regional pattern of implementation of Serious Case Review recommendations and the impact of change on performance;
  - regional dissemination of learning from Serious Case Reviews;
  - challenge of the quality of local needs analysis, alignment of that analysis with local Children and Young People's Plan priorities and judgement about adequacy of what is then commissioned in respect of support for all children, children 'in need' and those in need of protection;
  - negotiation with local authorities on appropriate targets for safeguarding, to be set out in the Children and Young People's Plan. These targets will be set within a new statutory framework, subject to the passage of legislation, and local authorities will consult their local partners on the Children's Trust Board as appropriate;
  - support to LSCBs in securing an adequate and high quality supply of Serious Case Review chairs and authors; and
  - working with local and regional partners such as Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships, the development of a stronger local advisory offer on safeguarding.
23. While the Chief Adviser will work closely with the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit, advising on priorities for its work and drawing on its support (e.g. in making an annual report to Parliament), he will not lead the Unit or be accountable for its work. Indeed, one important aspect of his role will be to challenge the progress and effectiveness of the Unit itself and to report on this.

24. The Unit will work with Ministers, local authorities, other national partners such as the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes and with Government regional offices to challenge and support every Children's Trust in the country to deliver the best possible arrangements for keeping children safe. We will expect to see high standards and continuous improvement and, where it is necessary, we will intervene. Every Children's Trust will be expected to undertake a thorough needs assessment of their local population as part of their Children and Young People's Plan; to make improvements in leadership, staffing, training, supervision and practice across all services; to raise the profile of safeguarding and child protection across children's services, health and police; to develop better local performance management; to lead a change in culture across frontline services that enables them to work more effectively to protect children; to work with existing organisations to create a shared evidence base about effective practice including evidence-based programmes, early intervention and preventative services; and to support the implementation of the recommendations of Serious Case Reviews and put in place systems to learn the lessons at local, regional and national level.
25. The Unit will be outward-facing and partnership-focused. 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. Partners in the Network will have a real understanding of, and influence in, their respective organisations' activities in relation to safeguarding. We will invite partners to join the Network this month.
26. The Unit will focus on:
  - driving improvement in safeguarding standards and **better, more consistent practice** across the country by promoting effective policy and good practice, co-ordinating more effective use and targeting of existing resources and support, and brokering effective partnerships at local level;
  - ensuring 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 the police;

- **monitoring and reporting on progress on safeguarding children** and telling the story of the way the system works so that there is greater public understanding of and commitment to keeping children safe; and
- increasing **public and professional confidence** in arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in this country.

### The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit's core functions

Support Children's Trusts Boards, local authorities, health and police by:

- identifying and promoting good practice and bringing greater co-ordination, coverage and complementarity to the various sources of improvement and support on good practice that already exist;
- undertaking gap analysis to identify where more support is needed and, as a consequence, commissioning tools or products to meet identified needs; and
- developing (or commissioning) a small number of definitive practice reports which will help the front line, e.g. on the way various thresholds operate across the country. Such studies could operate by bringing together teams from partners on a 'deep dive' approach using established methodologies.

Monitor and challenge progress on the implementation of the recommendations in Lord Laming's report by:

- producing comparative analysis on variations in local performance and the use of different indicators for improving outcomes and services;
- sourcing information on progress from Government departments and other partners;
- reflecting the view point of the front line on progress by making use of secondments of practitioners into the Unit and/or by developing a close 'family' of practitioners that it can readily access to 'test the water' on whether national, regional and local initiatives are really making a difference to outcomes for children; and
- supporting the Chief Adviser in producing an annual public report to Parliament and in e.g. giving evidence to Select Committee.

27. The Unit will publish a detailed work programme in September 2009 and will support the Chief Adviser in preparing his annual report to Parliament on safeguarding progress and on the implementation of this action plan. The Chief Adviser's annual report will also include an assessment of the Unit's effectiveness in driving improvements in safeguarding practice.
28. The Unit will be operational by 1 July 2009. 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.
29. A head of the Unit, responsible for the day-to-day running of the Unit will be recruited through open competition.

### **A more rigorous inspection framework**

30. A rigorous inspection framework is a crucial part of the overall system for safeguarding children and young people. Ofsted is the lead inspectorate for children's services but the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) also have key roles. Close working across the inspectorates is important and all four inspectorates are taking action to strengthen inspection arrangements for safeguarding.

#### **Ofsted**

31. Ofsted have designed more rigorous inspection arrangements for safeguarding and will shortly be publishing a new framework for a rolling programme of inspections of safeguarding and looked after children in all areas and covering the role of all partners, on a three year cycle. They will also be publishing a framework for a new annual inspection of child protection in local authority children's services.
32. Ofsted have also 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 in schools 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.

33. Ofsted will ensure that inspectors have the appropriate skills and expertise to inspect the safeguarding and child protection elements of frontline services.
34. 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.
35. 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 Serious Case Reviews in the year and will consider the format of the second interim report to enable more in-depth analysis where this would be beneficial.

### Care Quality Commission

36. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is committed to working in partnership with Ofsted to inspect and assess the health-related elements of its programme and thus provide leverage alongside Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) to improvement of practice and outcomes, and will work closely with Ofsted to ensure that its inspection framework is sound, workable and adaptable for the health element of the inspection programme. In addition, the CQC's own 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 against national standards including a specific standard relating to child protection arrangements. The Commission will be rigorous in its assessments of services and will take follow-up action against non-compliance where necessary.
37. CQC is also working to ensure that all staff inspecting children's services are suitably experienced and qualified, by setting clear criteria for their involvement which includes a track record of working in children's health services as well as robust inspection and joint working expertise.

38. 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. This contains a major thrust on safety and safeguarding, which will be refined to accommodate Lord Laming's recommendations and form the basis of a robust CQC assessment and enforcement model.

### HMIC

39. HMIC is currently reviewing its inspection methodology and is moving to Rounded Assessment. A Rounded Assessment of every police 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.
40. 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.
41. 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.

### HMIP

42. The Chief Inspector of Probation has consistently promoted the inspection of actual work involved in safeguarding and public protection. Implementation of Lord Laming's recommendation will simply build on existing practices. Historically, to support this, HMI Probation has used inspectors on secondment from Ofsted. In addition, there is an existing agreement in principle between Ofsted and HMI Probation for Ofsted to continue to assist with safeguarding for newly appointed Inspectorate staff.

## Local leadership and accountability

43. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill, currently before Parliament, sets out the Government's proposals to strengthen Children's Trusts. Every Children's Trust should have a Board on which the partners and the local community are represented. Subject to the passage of legislation, the Children's Trust Board will have responsibility for producing a Children and Young People's Plan for the local area, informed by a needs analysis and full consultation, including with children, young people and their families.
44. The Children's Trust Board – drawing on support and challenge from the Local Safeguarding Children Board – will ensure that the Children and Young People's Plan covers strengths and weaknesses in the area, what has been achieved in the last year and what more needs to be done by each partner to improve outcomes in safeguarding. The Plan should also include clear targets for improving outcomes for keeping children safe. The Government will work with partners to review the range of safeguarding indicators, following Lord Laming's recommendation, and will publish a new set of national indicators by the end of September 2009. These revised indicators will form the basis of the targets set by Children's Trusts.
45. 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 but, subject to the passage of legislation, they will be developed with stakeholders by autumn and implemented as soon as possible thereafter, in consultation with local partners.
46. The Government's immediate response to Lord Laming's report accepted his recommendations on the respective roles and responsibilities of LSCBs and Children's Trusts which stressed the importance of a *"clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities between LSCBs and Children's Trusts to ensure appropriate challenge, scrutiny and impartiality"*. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should include membership from the senior decision

makers from all safeguarding partners. Lord Laming also recommended that the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board should not be chaired by the same person and that the LSCB chair, who must be of sufficient stature and authority, 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.

47. We went further to ensure that there is complete clarity about local accountabilities underpinned by effective local challenge. We are therefore taking action to put in place the following arrangements:

- **The Children's Trust and the LSCB** have important but distinctive roles in keeping children safe. The Children's Trust is accountable for ensuring that services deliver better outcomes, with the Children's Trust Board being specifically accountable for overseeing the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The LSCB should be responsible for challenging every member of the Children's Trust, through the Children's Trust Board, on their success in ensuring that children and young people are kept safe. The LSCB should publish an annual report on the effectiveness of arrangements locally, and the contribution and activities of each local partner, for keeping children safe, as recommended in Lord Laming's report. The complementary roles of the two bodies – and the challenge of the LSCB to the Children's Trust – will only work effectively if the two bodies are chaired by different people. There will now be a presumption that the LSCB is chaired by someone independent of the local agencies so that the LSCB can exercise its local challenge function effectively. We accept, however, that it may take time to develop sufficient availability of suitable independent chairs and we are therefore proposing to work towards this arrangement over time. This will be an early priority for the new Chief Adviser and the Unit.
- **Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) and Lead Members for Children's Services** have central roles. Directors of Children's Services have lead responsibility for improving outcomes for children in their area. Lead Members for Children's Services are politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and should provide the political leadership needed for the effective co-ordination of work with other relevant agencies with safeguarding responsibilities

(such as the police and the health service). Lead Members should also take steps to assure themselves that effective quality assurance systems for safeguarding are in place and functioning effectively. Both the DCS and the Lead Member should always be members of both the Children's Trust Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- **Local Authority Chief Executives and Council Leaders** also have critical roles to play. Chief Executives are responsible for satisfying themselves that the Directors of Children's Services are fulfilling their managerial responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, including in particular by ensuring that the relationship between the Children's Trust and the LSCB is working effectively; that clear responsibility has been assigned within the local authority and among Children's Trust partners for improving services and outcomes; and that targets for improving safeguarding and progress against them are reported to the Local Strategic Partnership. Every year, as part of the Children's Trust annual report, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council should make an assessment of the effectiveness of local governance and partnership arrangements for improving outcomes for children and supporting the best possible standards for safeguarding children.
  - **The wider public** also has an important role to play, as keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. It is right that Children's Trust Boards should actively seek the views of the local community and consult children, young people and their families when drawing up Children and Young People's Plans. We believe Local Safeguarding Children Boards arrangements should be opened up to wider public scrutiny through the appointment of two lay members drawn from the local community to the LSCB and we have brought forward an amendment to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to require this. This will support stronger public engagement in, and understanding of, children's safety issues. The voice and experiences of young people should also strongly inform the LSCB's work.
48. We will incorporate these descriptions of roles and responsibilities for DCSs and Lead Members in revised statutory guidance which will be published in June 2009. This will also be incorporated in the revised *Working Together to*

*Safeguard Children* guidance published by the end of the year, subject to the passage of legislation.

49. Revised statutory guidance for Children's Trust Boards and on the scope, structure and content of Children and Young People's Plans will be prepared following the passage of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill and will be published in spring 2010.

### Supporting local leaders

50. On 12 March, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families accepted proposals from the Chief Executive of the National College of School Leadership, Steve Munby, to extend the remit of the College to provide better support to DCSs, aspirant DCSs and school and children's centre leaders across the children's services sector including:
  - a new leadership programme for DCSs which will begin this autumn with a first intake of twenty-four;
  - an Executive Leadership programme for the more experienced DCSs starting in 2010/11 that would enable them to use their expertise more widely; and
  - a Succession Planning Strategy from 2010/11 onward to ensure a strong flow of talent into DCS posts and an Accelerated Leadership Programme to identify those with the greatest potential to move forward rapidly to DCS posts.
51. These proposals will make an important contribution to strengthening local leadership of children's services. Progress is already underway and Steve Munby wrote to all DCSs on 8 April inviting nominations for the first twenty-four places on the new leadership programme. The NCSL is also consulting stakeholders on changing its name to reflect its new broader remit.
52. It is also vital that managers in frontline practice have the necessary development and support to enable them to provide strong leadership. We have asked the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to develop a programme of intensive support and coaching for social work team leaders and first line managers, particularly those working in child protection and safeguarding. The Government expects the NCSL to be closely involved in this urgent work, contributing their advice and expertise.

53. The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO), led by Christine Davies, was established in July 2008 to identify and disseminate effective practice in children's services. The Government has asked C4EO to undertake an additional strand of their programme on *Protecting children living in families where they are at high risk of abuse, harm or neglect*.
54. As part of their work on this new strand, C4EO have initiated work to conduct rapid research reviews to look at the following three issues:
  - how to support the difficult decisions that frontline staff need to make;
  - how best to intervene where there are concerns that a child may be being harmed or neglected and where there is evidence that a child has or is likely to suffer significant harm; and
  - how best to maintain oversight and review of cases in the light of changing circumstances and/or new information.
55. Research briefings on the above will be published in early June 2009 on C4EO's website and findings will be disseminated through four national workshops, to take place in July, 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.
56. C4EO will also extend the scope of regional workshops planned for November 2009 on supporting vulnerable children so that they focus on the management and quality of child protection practice, in particular on working with highly resistant families who do not engage or co-operate with services. These nine workshops will be available to 3rd and 4th tier officers (service managers, team leaders) for up to three from each local authority area. A total of 450 would be able to participate, to reflect on findings, share experience, and agree how messages can be applied in their local contexts.

### **Supporting the front line**

57. Strong leadership, governance, and public engagement are all essential. But what matters most to children and families is the support they receive day to day from frontline services. People working at the front line need to earn our confidence but deserve our support. Only a strong, confident workforce can make the right decisions and provide the right support.

58. This is not just about intervening to protect children at risk but also about intervening early with children and families who have additional needs to make sure that those needs are met before an issue turns into a major problem. And it's not just about frontline social workers: everyone in the wider public services – schools, police, health services – has a vital role to play in helping keep children safe.

### Early intervention: schools and children's centres

59. All services that have contact with children or with members of their families need to be alert to signs that a child has additional needs, whether as a result of the child's disability or special educational need, or because adults in the family face problems that affect their capacity to parent effectively, or because of a combination of these factors. Disabled children can be particularly vulnerable and it is important that practitioners communicate with them and are alert to their particular needs. Schools and children's centres which have more regular contact with children than other services have a particularly important role to play in early intervention. In our forthcoming 21st Century Schools White Paper we will set out a national framework for early intervention to meet children's additional needs which will set out the roles and responsibilities of schools and other services.
60. Sure Start Children's Centres are already demonstrating how early intervention can work in practice. They are a new universal service, providing a welcoming local centre where all parents can easily find the services they need – from pregnancy through into their children's early years – and meet a range of health and other professionals. Any problems that are detected can easily be followed up by the multi-agency team. And staff from the centres will be reaching out to families who are not making use of the centre, visiting them at home to check there are no problems and to encourage them to use the services provided.
61. The principle set out in the Children's Plan – that it is parents not the Government that brings up children – still holds. But, recognising that parents sometimes need help and support to do the best by their children, we have significantly increased the support for parents – through schools and children's centres, Parent Support Advisers, Parent Know How and more evidence-based parenting programmes. As part of our Think Family programme we will set a clear expectation of how children's and adults' services should adopt a more consistent approach to identifying and working effectively with families at risk.

We will bring all our work on families together in a wide-ranging families and relationships green paper to be published in the autumn.

### Information sharing and assessment

62. Effective information sharing is key to delivering better, more efficient services co-ordinated around the needs of children, young people and families. Building understanding and confidence in information sharing is essential to support early intervention and preventative work as well as for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. Most decisions to share information require professional judgement. Practitioners must feel confident about when and how information can be shared legally and professionally, and that they will have the support of their managers and organisations. Lord Laming recommended that Children's Trusts should ensure that the Government's Information Sharing guidance<sup>7</sup> is applied consistently by all partners. In order to achieve this, organisations should have in place appropriate and consistent governance frameworks to promote and support good practice in information sharing as well as ensuring that the guidance is embedded in training and education for frontline staff and their managers.
63. ContactPoint is a national online directory for people who work with children and young people. It is a tool designed to help improve the wellbeing of all children and young people, to help keep them safe and ensure that no child slips through the net. ContactPoint provides a quick way for a practitioner to find out who else is working with the same child thereby enabling practitioners across the children's workforce to work together when they need to, and provide a more co-ordinated approach to meet a child's needs. The delivery of ContactPoint is being phased in across England. Nineteen 'early adopter' organisations (seventeen local authorities in the North West plus Barnado's and KIDS) have trained their ContactPoint management teams on the system and are making it ready for practitioner use. All other local authorities will train their management teams later this year.
64. The Children's Workforce Development Council will shortly be issuing updated guidance on the Common Assessment Framework and have developed a range of web-based material to help local authorities and their Children's Trust partners to implement CAF as part of the development of integrated working locally.

## The police

65. The Police play an important part in child safety. Working with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities, and the National Police 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.
66. Lord Laming also recommended that the Home Office must ensure that child protection teams have specialist training to support them in their work. The National Police Improvement Agency 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 *Working Together to Safeguard Children* 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.

## The health service

67. 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<sup>8</sup>. The Department of Health will build on this in alignment with work to develop new statutory targets and their indicators.

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David Nicholson's 1 December 2008 letter is at [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH\\_091387](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Lettersandcirculars/Dearcolleagueletters/DH_091387)

68. *Healthy lives, brighter futures*<sup>9</sup>, the joint strategy for children and young people's health, set out a series of commitments to support and strengthen the child health workforce.
69. Lord Laming's report challenged us to build further on the commitments we have already set out in *Healthy lives, brighter futures*: to develop the health visiting workforce further, to provide leadership and expert practice for the Healthy Child Programme, and to use health visitors' specialist skills in supporting vulnerable families and making their contribution to safeguarding. He called for immediate action to increase the numbers, confidence and competence of health visiting staff.
70. On 12 March 2009, the Secretary of State for Health announced an Action On Health Visiting Programme to take forward our commitments at a pace and with scope that we believe will meet that challenge. Working closely with expert practitioners, leaders and managers, the Action on Health Visiting Programme will tackle issues including definition and delivery of key roles for health visitors, supported by evidence and with measurable outcomes; action on skills, development and career opportunities for the current workforce; and the action needed, including growth in the number of health visitors, to ensure the NHS is able to recruit and retain the workforce that will deliver the outcomes to which we are all committed.
71. The Action on Health Visiting programme was agreed at a joint Department of Health/Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association summit on 5 May. A programme report will be produced by October 2009.
72. In parallel, Dr Sheila Shribman, the National Clinical Director for Children, Young People and Maternity Services is working closely with NHS and professional leaders to build on existing work and respond to Lord Laming's recommendations on other areas of training, development and support for staff on safeguarding children, recognising the important contributions that GPs, practice nurses, paediatricians, A&E staff, mental health staff, ambulance staff and others who engage with children and families have to make.

## Social work reform

73. In December 2008 we published our *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy*<sup>10</sup> which confirmed that progress in addressing the problems facing children and families' social work is critical in improving outcomes for all children and young people. In response, we established the Social Work Task Force to conduct a 'nuts and bolts' review of the social work profession and to look at how frontline social work practice needs to be improved. We asked the Task Force to make recommendations which will inform the comprehensive and ambitious programme for change in social work that the Government will set out in the autumn.
74. Social workers are critical to the nation. They are key figures in the lives of the most vulnerable children in this country and they need to be excellent in their practice. The Government is committed to making sure that social workers have the training, support and capacity to achieve this. While there have already been some important reforms, including a new social work degree, it is clear from Lord Laming's report that more must be done.
75. In response to Lord Laming's report, we asked the Social Work Task Force to advise on how those of his recommendations which relate to social work should be implemented. We are grateful to Moira Gibb and her colleagues on the Task Force for writing to us<sup>11</sup> to set out their early findings and recommendations. We particularly welcome the Task Force's advice that, in implementing Lord Laming's recommendations, we must go further and deeper to address, comprehensively, the challenges that are facing both adults' and children's social work. We are also very pleased that the Task Force is beginning to develop a leadership role within the sector, stimulating the debate – and solutions – which will shape the future of the profession and involving social workers themselves, but also service users and other professions.
76. The Task Force will report fully to the Government in October and we are committed to bringing forward a comprehensive programme of reform for the profession at that time. Lord Laming's report, however, painted a picture of the pressures in the system which reinforces the need for immediate action. The Government is therefore announcing today

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10 *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy*, HM Government (DCSF), December 2008

11 First report of the Social Work Task Force available at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/swtf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/swtf)

measures we will take to reform the Integrated Children's System, and a new Social Work Transformation Fund which will support immediate improvements and support.

### Integrated Children's System (ICS)

77. The Social Work Task Force says that effective record-keeping is an essential part of good social work; that in the 21st century this requires an effective IT approach; and that the ICS undoubtedly has the potential to deliver this. However, the Task Force also highlights a number of current problems with the local implementation of ICS systems and says these have been exacerbated by overly prescriptive national requirements. The intense frustration with ICS that the Task Force has found among many frontline workers is, it explains, the unfortunate result.
78. The Task Force makes a series of recommendations which, it believes, will rapidly have a positive impact on how frontline workers experience ICS. The Task Force says its proposed changes will enhance the positive elements of the system by making it more flexible and by supporting its record-keeping capacity, while stripping out other, unnecessary features.
79. We accept the Task Force's advice in this area and we will act immediately to put it into effect.
80. We will do so because we think it is essential that any such local system supports effective social work practice as frontline practitioners themselves see it. We believe it is crucial that social workers feel the ICS is a tool that supports them, as professionals, in the difficult work they do with children and families. So we will work with local authorities to provide them with more effective support in commissioning and developing high quality local ICS systems.
81. We will also take immediate action to:
  - free up national requirements in relation to the ICS. We will authorise local authorities and suppliers, in discussion with professionals, to remove 'forms' and 'exemplars' in local systems giving them more flexibility to use their professional judgement in deciding how they will comply with statutory requirements;

- relax the deadline for the implementation of Phase 1C<sup>12</sup> of the ICS to allow local authorities, professionals and suppliers 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.
82. 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 roles, practice and support in social work. We will therefore work closely with the Task Force over the coming months to come to ensure that happens.

### Social Work Transformation Fund

83. In our immediate response to Lord Laming's report on 12 March, the Government announced a number of measures to improve capacity in the workforce. These are not the complete answer to the issues Lord Laming and the Social Work Task Force highlight but through them, we aim to ease some of the most pressing concerns as quickly as possible.
84. We are already investing £73 million in social work reform, and the Government is now announcing an additional £57.8 million to create a Social Work Transformation Fund which will increase the capacity of the system to train and support social workers, and implement change in the immediate term<sup>13</sup>. This is a measure of the Government's commitment to service users, social workers, and employers and our determination to improve the system.
85. It is clear that the recruitment and retention of children and families' social workers are issues of key concern, and particularly severe in local authorities. To improve supply into social work, the Government has announced a Return to Social Work scheme to help former social workers move back more easily into the workforce. It will be delivered by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) working in partnership with the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA). The campaign will start this month, with former social workers able to access information on line, and from July, through a

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12 'Phase 1C' refers to the planned set of updates for the ICS

13 This new investment brings the total that DCSF is spending to support children and families social workers in the current CSR period (2008-11) to £130 million

- telephone helpline which will help returning social workers to identify their support and training needs. Our aim is that there should be 500 social workers back in the workplace from this autumn, supported by refresher training where they need it.
86. We want to support more high achieving graduates to train to be social workers. We announced in March that we would sponsor a new cohort of the Graduate Recruitment Scheme. We are pleased to announce that 200 high quality social work students will be able to train to join the profession through this scheme in September. CWDC will deliver this, working in partnership with employers and universities.
  87. It is critical that new social workers are well supported in their first year of practice – Lord Laming and the Social Work Task Force have told us that this is not happening consistently at present. Last year, DCSF launched the Newly Qualified Social Worker pilot programme to better support the transition from training to practice. In his report, Lord Laming recommended that all newly qualified social workers should receive this level of support and the Government agreed, announcing on 12 March that the programme will be available to all new social workers in statutory children and families’ services and the third sector from September 2009. New funding has been made available to support the delivery of this programme, much of which will go to employers through CWDC.
  88. At the other end of the spectrum it is important that the expertise of experienced social workers is retained on the front line and that there are suitably recognised roles to enable this. On 12 March the Government announced the Advanced Social Work Professional (ASWP) status which will create senior practice-focused roles for excellent and experienced social workers in local authority children’s services. CWDC, working with local authorities, will begin to assess candidates for the new status in October and they will be in post and making a difference on the front line soon after.
  89. No matter the stage of career, continually seeking to further knowledge, skills and expertise is a critical function of being a social worker. That is why we have announced a practice-based Masters in social work. We have asked GSCC, CWDC and Skills for Care to work together to define and consult on this and expect to pilot the new Masters degree from early 2011.

90. Effective leadership at all levels in the system will be essential if we are going to drive forward improvements. The National College for School Leadership is beginning to make a big difference to the support available to senior leaders in children's services and CWDC are also piloting a support scheme for middle managers of children's social care services. Good leadership on the front line is also vitally important and the additional support for frontline managers that we announced on 12 March will help them develop their leadership, management and supervision skills from this autumn.
91. We are writing today to all frontline social workers to explain how these actions will make a difference to those on the ground.

### **Reducing delay in care proceedings**

92. 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 care proceedings for an individual child, supported by a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 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.
93. The Ministry of Justice is clear that there is a need for local monitoring of performance and has agreed with its partners that this is likely to be undertaken through the existing network of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. In addition, the newly established inter-agency National Family Justice Board will support performance improvement on a national basis.
94. A detailed announcement will be made later this year, with a view to having the system-wide target and supporting Key Performance Indicators fully in place for 2010/11. However, individual agencies will be asked to adapt their KPIs and commence working to reduce delay at the earliest opportunity once the target has been established.

## **Court fees**

95. In line with 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.
96. 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. His report is expected to present evidence on the impact of court fees in a local authority's decision-making process, including in relation to how budgets are allocated and managed within any local authority area and how and by whom decisions regarding care proceedings are made.
97. Appropriate steps would then be taken to implement changes which Mr Plowden might recommend in light of the conclusions he draws as to whether or not there is clear evidence that fees are a deterrent to a local authority commencing care proceedings.

## **Conclusion and action plan**

98. Nothing can be more important than keeping children and young people safe. The Government is determined to act on Lord Laming's recommendations swiftly and decisively. And we know from the reactions of national and local partners – and the public – that this is a shared determination. By taking these actions forward from today, we intend to meet the challenges set out in Lord Laming's report and to be held to account for progress in implementing his recommendations.
99. The next section of this response contains a detailed action plan responding to each of Lord Laming's recommendations. Progress against this action plan will be kept under review by the new Ministerial subgroup with the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children who will report annually to Parliament.
100. We hope Lord Laming's report and the action we are taking from today mark a further, decisive move forward. It is up to all us now to hold firm on our commitment, maintain momentum and keep the child at the centre.

# Action Plan

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
1	<p>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.</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>Cabinet Sub-Committee subgroup established from May 2009 to meet quarterly with the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children.</p>
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"> <li>● working with the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People to set and publish challenging timescales for the recommendations in this report;</li> <li>● 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;</li> <li>● raising the profile of safeguarding and child protection across children's services, health and police;</li> <li>● supporting the development of effective national priorities on safeguarding for all frontline services, and the development of local performance management to drive these priorities;</li> <li>● leading a change in culture across frontline services that enables them to work more effectively to protect children;</li> <li>● 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;</li> </ul>	<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>First Chief Adviser report to Parliament by April 2010.</p> <p>Expert Group established from May 2009.</p> <p>NSDU operational by July 2009.</p>

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● working with existing organisations to create a shared evidence base about effective practice including evidence-based programmes, early intervention and preventative services;</li> <li>● 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;</li> <li>● 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</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul>	<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 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>	<p>Partnership Network established from May 2009 onwards.</p> <p>NSDU work programme published by September 2009.</p> <p>Cabinet Sub-Committee subgroup established from May 2009 to meet quarterly.</p>

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
3	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.	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.	Cabinet Sub-Committee subgroup established from May 2009 to meet quarterly with the Chief Adviser.
4	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.	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.	Subject to the passage of legislation, new statutory targets will be developed with stakeholders by autumn 2009 and implemented as soon as possible thereafter, in consultation with local partners.
5	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.	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.	To be aligned as far as possible with work on Recommendation 4.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
6	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	To be developed as part of revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
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 DCS/LM guidance published June 2009. Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
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 <i>Protecting children living in families where they are at high risk of abuse, harm or neglect for delivery</i>.</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>Research briefings and national workshops by June 2009.</p> <p>Regional workshops November 2009.</p>

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
9	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.	To be developed in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and reflected in 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.	NSDU work programme to be published September 2009.  Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
10	Ofsted should revise the inspection and improvement regime for schools giving greater prominence to how well schools are fulfilling their responsibilities for child protection.	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.	The new school inspection framework will apply from September 2009.
11	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> 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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
12	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.	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> .	We shall produce a set of recommendations by December 2009 that take account of the costs and affordability of implementation.
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.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
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.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
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"> <li>● how much supervision time social workers need, and;</li> <li>● how Government, employers and social workers can ensure that guidance in relation to supervision time is fulfilled in practice.</li> </ul>	Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.
16	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> to set out the elements of high quality supervision focused on case planning, constructive challenge and professional development.	<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>, 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>	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
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 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>Detail of immediate changes to be confirmed May 2009.</p> <p>Other reforms to be set out in response to the Social Work Task Force's report October 2009.</p>
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"> <li>● 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;</li> <li>● 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</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul> <p>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>	<p>Detail of immediate changes to be confirmed May 2009.</p> <p>Other reforms to be set out in response to the Social Work Task Force's report October 2009.</p>

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
19	<p>The Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>, and Children's Trusts must take appropriate action to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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;</li> <li>● 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</li> <li>● formal procedures are in place for managing a conflict of opinion between professionals from different services over the safety of a child.</li> </ul>	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
20	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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
21	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.	The NSDU will publish its work programme by September 2009 and we expect this guidance to be identified as an early priority.	NSDU will publish its work programme by September 2009.

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22	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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance. Mental Health Trusts are already statutory members of LSCBs.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
23	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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
24	<p>The Social Work Task Force should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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;</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>In the immediate term, the Government is already taking a number of actions to address recruitment and supply challenges in the workforce, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a national marketing and recruitment campaign to launch later this year;</li> <li>● a Return to Social Work Scheme to support former social workers back into the profession;</li> <li>● a Graduate Recruitment Scheme to sponsor high quality graduates to undertake social worker training;</li> <li>● recruitment and retention pilots in two regions with high vacancy and turnover rates.</li> </ul>	Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>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</li> </ul>	<p>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> <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.</p> <p>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> <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>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p> <p>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<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.</p> <p>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>	Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.
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.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
26	<p>The General Social Care Council together relevant government departments should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> </ul>	<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 HEIs, to advise on the improvements necessary to social work degrees and post graduate training, and the system which provides them.</p> <p>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>	Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>put in place a comprehensive inspection regime to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees across higher education institutions.</li> </ul>	<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>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p> <p>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p>
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>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p>
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>Social Work Reform programme to be set out autumn 2009.</p>

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
29	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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and in the NSDU's work programme.	NSDU work programme to be published September 2009.  Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance December 2009.
30	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.	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance and in the NSDU's work programme.	NSDU work programme to be published September 2009.  Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance December 2009.
31	The General Social Care Council 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.	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.  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.	The revised Code of Practice will be in place by October 2009.
32	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.	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.	A programme report will be produced by October 2009.

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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>Work to promote the commissioning and implementation of the HCP for 0-5 year olds will be completed by March 2010.</p> <p>The HCP for 5-19 year olds will be available by December 2009.</p> <p>The Family Nurse Partnership programme will be expanded to 70 test sites 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>A programme of action, taking account of the costs and affordability of implementation, will be agreed by December 2009.</p> <p>Proposals for amending the Regulations and updating the guidance on operation of the performers list will be produced by December 2009.</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>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>Action will be agreed by December 2009.</p>
36	<p>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.</p>	<p>Working with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities, and the National Police 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>	<p>Updated Specialist Training to be available to police forces by December 2009.</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 National Police Improvement Agency 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 <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>	
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>	

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		<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>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.</p>	<p>New regulatory framework established by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 from 2010.</p> <p>Ofsted-led 3-year rolling programme from June 2009.</p> <p>HMIC fieldwork to commence July/ August 2009; first graded judgements by end November 2009.</p>

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		<p>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>	
<b>38</b>	<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>	Ongoing.
<b>39</b>	<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>	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.

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40	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise the framework for Serious Case Reviews to ensure that the Serious Case Review 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.	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.
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.	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.
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.	SCR evaluation framework consultation July 2009.
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.	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.
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.	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.

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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.	NSDU work programme to be published by end September 2009.
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.	NSDU work programme to be published by end September 2009.
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.	Ongoing.
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.	Revised Chapter 8 of <i>Working Together</i> guidance issued for consultation by July 2009.
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.	From 2009 onwards.

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50	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.	An interim report on the Loughborough University research will be published in June 2009. Practice guidance will be developed in light of its findings.	Interim report by June and LSCB practice guidance October 2009.
51	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.	To be reflected in revised regulations and revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
52	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.	To be reflected in revised regulations and revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.
53	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.	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.	Revised <i>Working Together</i> guidance by December 2009.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
54	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.	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.	Ongoing.
55	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'.	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).	Ongoing.
56	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.	The Chief Adviser will present his first annual report in April 2010.	From April 2010.

Ref no	Lord Laming's recommendation	Response	By when
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>A detailed announcement will be made later this year.</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>Review report by September 2009.</p>











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