

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**11 JUNE 2009**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**COUNCIL DECISION/CABINET DECISION/KEY DECISION**

**Portfolio – Children and Young People: Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Alex Cunningham**

**LORD LAMING'S PROGRESS REPORT: PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ENGLAND**

1. Summary

- 1.1 In November 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families commissioned Lord Laming to undertake an independent progress report on child protection in England. This followed the death of Baby P in Haringey. Lord Laming had previously chaired the Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.
- 1.2 The Review considered what good practice had been achieved in safeguarding since the Climbié Inquiry Report was published in 2003, the key barriers which prevented efficient and effective safeguarding.
- 1.3 It found that the Every Child Matters reforms, introduced by the Children Act 2004, provide a sound framework for protecting children and promoting their welfare. However, he also found that there needed to be a step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm. To achieve this, he challenged leaders of local services to accept their responsibility to translate policy, legislation and guidance into day to day practice on the frontline of every service.
- 1.4 Lord Laming made fifty eight recommendations to address the issues he identified; targeted at government and local agencies. These include recommendations in respect of the independent chairing of the Serious Case Review process and about the relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Lead Member and the Children's Trust.
- 1.5 The recommendations were fully accepted by the Secretary of State on the day the report was published. A more detailed response was published on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
- 1.6 This report summarises Lord Laming's report and the Government's response to his recommendations

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

1. note Lord Laming's findings and recommendations and the response of the Secretary of State to these
2. receive a further report on the detailed implications for the Council of those recommendations which relate to the local authority

### 3. Reasons for the Recommendations

The report considers the protection of the most vulnerable children in England and the key role that the Council plays is given considerable attention. It is therefore important to have time to fully consider the detailed implications of Lord Laming's recommendations because they could have significant impact: both in respect of the front line delivery of services but also on the way in which the council contributes to the leadership and scrutiny of the inter-agency working via the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

### 4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet are asked to:

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## BACKGROUND

1. In November 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families commissioned Lord Laming to undertake an independent progress report on child protection in England. This followed the death of Baby P in Haringey. Lord Laming had previously chaired the Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.
2. The Review was to look at what good practice had been achieved in safeguarding since the Climbié Inquiry Report was published, what key barriers existed which prevented efficient and effective safeguarding and what actions should be taken by government and local agencies.
3. Lord Laming received 100 written submissions, and his Team visited six local areas and met with staff from the key agencies involved in safeguarding (local authorities, education, health and police). They also hosted a series of seminars to gather views of national stakeholders, local leaders and frontline staff. Meetings were held with key stakeholders and Trade Unions and children and young people gave their views via the Children's Commissioner.

## KEY FINDINGS

4. Lord Laming considered that there has been progress since 2003, both nationally and locally and reaffirmed that there can be no more important responsibility than the protection of the most vulnerable children from harm at the hands of their carers. He correctly pointed out that policies, legislation, structures and procedures are important, but that it is the robust and consistent application of these policies and procedures which keep children and young people safe.
5. He highlighted the fact that whilst children and young people's safety is "a matter for us all" a heavy responsibility has been placed on the key statutory agencies to make sure this happens. He made it clear that responsibility for child protection and safeguarding must sit across all partner agencies at both a local and national government level.
6. Key findings are:
  - Commitment and enthusiasm for the Every Child Matters agenda
  - Early intervention is vital in enabling children to reach their full potential; but there are differing understandings amongst professionals in universal services about what early intervention actually is; i.e. it is about early support, not just about early years services
  - Schools and early years settings have a key role in early identification, intervention and support for children at risk of significant harm or with additional needs.
  - Assessment of a child's needs must be joint or parallel assessment with all professionals concerned for the child's safety or welfare
  - "Working Together" sets out sound practices but processes are not always well understood and findings of some Serious Case Reviews demonstrate that "simple steps from this guidance could have saved lives".
  - Managers must "lead by example" and be accountable for frontline delivery
  - There has been an "over-emphasis on process and targets" - resulting in a "loss of confidence" among social workers
  - The lack of a centralised computer system is "hampering progress"
  - Professional practice is also being hindered by an "over-complicated, lengthy and tick-box assessment and recording system"
  - There is a lack of communication and joined-up working between agencies
  - Important information is not always shared because data protection laws are "still not well understood" by staff, especially in health agencies
  - There is a lack of funding - making social and child protection work a "Cinderella service"

- Social workers feel undertrained
- There has been a reduction in child protection posts in police forces since the "initial response" to Victoria Climbié.

7. Lord Laming was clear that whilst "a great deal of progress has been made", there now needs to be a "step change" in the arrangements to protect children from harm. He therefore made 58 recommendations; many directed at central government. (see Appendix 1 for detail) These cover:

- Establishment of a National Safeguarding Delivery Unit accountable to Parliament to support local improvement and inject drive into the implementation of change.
- *Leadership and accountability - nationally*
  - A comprehensive approach across national strategies,
  - organisation of central services and models of delivery they promote;
  - Department of Health to clarify and strengthen responsibilities of Strategic Health Authorities for performance management of PCTs on safeguarding and child protection)
- *Leadership and accountability - locally* (i.e. via the Children's Trust, Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Council), with training on safeguarding and leadership for senior political leaders and managers across frontline services, These recommendations seek to ensure that political and professional leaders within Children's Services are supported and held to account politically and professionally at the highest level within their organisation. A further recommendation is that the needs assessment that informs the Children and Young People's Plan should pay particular attention to general need of children and those in need of safeguarding).
- *Support for children* including the need for Ofsted to give greater prominence in school inspections to how well schools are fulfilling their responsibilities for child protection, Working Together to be revised, DCSF/Department of Health to revise guidance for Accident and Emergency staff, Children's Trusts to ensure all professionals involved with children input to assessments, early access to effective services for children in need, ensuring supervision for social workers, and improvements to the Integrated Children's System (ICS) system
- *Inter-agency working* including need to strengthen Working Together in respect of referrals, (including recognition of children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health, substance misuse) input to working with children subject to a child protection plan, statutory representation on the LSCB from schools, adult mental health and adult substance misuse services
- *Children's workforce* especially promoting the need to increase the supply of social workers, national guidelines on caseloads, development of practice focused postgraduate qualifications, Department of Health to prioritise recruitment and professional development of health visitors, review of the role of health visitors and ensuring GPs have skills and training in child protection
- *Improvement and challenge* review of inspection frameworks across frontline services, revision of guidance in respect of Serious Case Reviews to ensure a focus on learning of lessons, and that the Chairs of Serious Case Review Panels and Serious Case Review authors should be independent of the LSCB and of the services involved in the case.
- *Organisation and finance* This group includes the requirement that the Children's Trust and LSCB should not be chaired by the same person.

There is also a recommendation to DCSF and the Department of Health to ensure children's services, police and health services have protected budgets for the staffing and training for child protection services.

- *Legal* aimed at reducing delay in care proceedings
8. The LGA held a conference on 25<sup>th</sup> March to enable discussion of the recommendations and this informed a response to DCSF. Lord Laming's report was welcomed but concern was expressed that the recommendations had not been costed. It was suggested that there needed to be joint work between local and central government to ensure that spending plans nationally support implementation.
  9. On the day that Lord Laming's report was published, the Government issued an immediate reply accepting the recommendations and announced the appointment of Sir Roger Singleton as Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children.
  10. The full response was published on 6<sup>th</sup> May: "The protection of children in England: action plan. The Government's response to Lord Laming". The action plan provides a detailed response to each of Lord Laming's recommendations (see Appendix 1).
  11. Key points from the response include:
    - Detail about the way in which the National Safeguarding Unit will work
    - Proposals for a more rigorous inspection framework
    - Strengthening of local leadership and accountability, by proposals in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to strengthen the Children's Trust Board, publication of a set of national performance indicators in respect of safeguarding to inform statutory and local target setting by Children's Trusts, clarifying the respective roles of the LSCB and the Children's Trust, clarifying the respective responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children's Services, the Council Leader and the Chief Executive.
    - Revision of Working Together
    - Leadership programmes for Directors of Children's Services, development of a programme of intensive support and coaching for Team Managers
    - Rapid research reviews to look at key practice issues such supporting decision making by frontline staff
    - Issuing updated guidance on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
    - Intention to bring forward a programme of reform of the social work profession once the report of the Social Work Taskforce is published
    - Accepting the Task Force's advice in respect of relaxing the national requirements in respect of the Integrated Children's System
    - Allocate £57.8m to create a Social Work Transformation Fund to increase capacity to train and support social workers and implement change in the immediate term.
    - Extend the Newly Qualified Social Worker pilot scheme to all newly qualified social workers from September 2009

## **LOCAL RESPONSE**

12. Lord Laming's report has generated local discussion within agencies. The Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board is to have a half-day workshop in June to consider the implications of the report for Stockton. The North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust Safeguarding Steering Group has also held a preliminary discussion of the implications and there will be further work led by the Designated Nurse (Stockton on Tees Teaching PCT) and the Cross-Tees Safeguarding Group.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13. At this stage it is not clear whether there will be financial implications arising from the local implementation of Lord Laming's recommendations.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

14. The Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004 are the two key pieces of legislation covering delivery of safeguarding services. The key Guidance doc drawn from these is Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006).
15. In the response to Lord Laming's recommendations, the Government sets out its intention to
  - bring forward amendments to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to include amendments to the set of statutory targets to include safeguarding targets
  - revise Statutory Guidance (to be published in June 2009) setting out roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services.
  - revise Working Together; with publication at the end of 2009, subject to passage of legislation.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

16. Child protection work involves working with the most vulnerable children and their families and does therefore carry a high risk. This is mitigated by
  - staffing structures that ensure good quality supervision
  - training for staff
  - quality assurance processes

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

17. The safeguarding of children is a key component of the Children and Young People's theme. Improving the life chances of children will also impact on their quality of life as an adult.
18. Safeguarding children and working with families also addresses community safety considerations.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING**

19. The responsibility of the Council as the Corporate Parent for Looked After Children includes ensuring that they are safeguarded. For many children who are looked after, safeguarding issues will be the reason they are not living away from their family. It is therefore important that the Council ensures that adequate safeguards are in place to provide a high quality experience whilst they are looked after.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

20. At this stage, consultation has not been appropriate.

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Background Papers

- *The protection of children in England: a progress report.* DCSF published 12 March 2009
- *The protection of children in England: action plan.* The Government's response to Lord Laming DCSF May 2009
- *Working Together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2006)*
- *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry* January 2003

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: not Ward specific

Property none



## APPENDIX 1

### Recommendations From The Protection of Children in England: Progress Report Laming March 2009

	Recommendation	Government's Response (May 2009)	National	Locally In place (Green)	Locally Ongoing (Amber)	Locally Not in Place (Red)	
1	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.	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).					
2	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:	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. 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. To assist him in his new role, Sir Roger is establishing a new Chief Adviser's Expert Group. 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.					
2.1	Working with the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People to set and publish challenging timescales for the implementation of recommendations of this report;						
2.2	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;						
2.3	Raising the profile of safeguarding and child protection across children's services, health and police;						
2.4	Supporting the development of effective national priorities on safeguarding for all frontline services, and the development of local performance management to drive these priorities.						
2.5	Leading a change in culture across frontline services that enables them to work more effectively to protect children;						
2.6	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;						
2.7	Working with existing organisations to create a shared evidence base about effective practice including evidence-based programmes, early intervention and preventative services;		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				
2.8	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;						

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Government's Response (May 2009)</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Locally In place (Green)</b>	<b>Locally Ongoing (Amber)</b>	<b>Locally Not in Place (Red)</b>
2.9	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	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.				
2.10	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.	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. 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. 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.				
<b>Leadership and Accountability</b>						
<b>3</b>	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.				
<b>4</b>	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 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				

	Recommendation	Government's Response (May 2009)	National	Locally In place (Green)	Locally Ongoing (Amber)	Locally Not in Place (Red)
		further discussion with 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.				
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 assessment, decision making, onward referrals and multi-agency working.	To be developed as part of revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.				
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.				
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.	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> . 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. C4EO will also extend the scope of regional workshops planned for November 2009. 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.				
9	Every Child'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	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				

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	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.	clearly the implications for safeguarding children and the impact on services that need to be provided.				
	<b>Support for Children</b>					
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.				
11	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children to set out clear expectations at 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.				
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> .				
13	Children's Trusts must ensure that all assessments of	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to</i>				

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	need for children and their families include evidence from all the professional 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.	<i>Safeguard Children</i> guidance.				
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.				
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>				
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>				
17	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	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				

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	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.	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.				
18	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>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>				
	<b>Interagency Working</b>					
19	The Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen Working Together to Safeguard Children, and Children's Trust must take appropriate action to ensure:	To be reflected in revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.				
19.1	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					

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19.2	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					
19.3	Formal procedures are in place for managing a conflict of opinions between professionals from different services over the safety of a child.					
20	All police, probation, adult mental health and adult drug 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.				
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.				
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.				
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.				
	<b>Children's Workforce</b>					
24	The Social Work Task Force should:					
24.1	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 of Children, Schools and Families. This should have a particular emphasis on child protection social workers;	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. In the immediate term, the Government is already taking a number of actions to address recruitment and supply challenges in the workforce, including: <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> </ul>				

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>				
24.2	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;	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. 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.				
24.3	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	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. 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.				
24.4	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.	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. 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.				



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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.				
26	The General Social Care Council, together with relevant government departments, should:	The Government will consider radical reforms of the social work education system if this is what the Task Force recommend. 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 HEI s, to advise on the improvements necessary to social work degrees and post graduate training, and the system which provides them. 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.				
26.1	Work with higher education institutions and employers to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees and strengthen their curriculum to provide high quality practical skills in children's social work					
26.2	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 placement's after the first year; and		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.			
26.3	Put in place a comprehensive inspection regime to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees across higher education.	The Government will implement Lord Laming's recommendations about inspection of higher education in the light of the Task Force's recommendations.				
27	The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should introduce a fully – funded practice focused children's social work postgraduate qualification for experiences children's social workers, with an expectation they will complete the programme as soon as is practicable.	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. 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. 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.				

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28	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.	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. 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.				
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 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.				
30	All Children's Trust should have sufficient multi-agency 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.				
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				
32	The Department of Health should prioritise its commitment to promote the recruitment and professional development of health visitors (made in Healthy lives, brighter futures) 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.				

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33	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.	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. 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. 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.				
34	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 practises, 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.	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				

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		Boards. 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. 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.				
35	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.	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.  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.				
36	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.	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.  Lord Laming also recommended that the Home Office must ensure that child protection teams				

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		<p>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>				
	<b>Improvement and Challenge</b>					
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. 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</p>				

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		<p>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. 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. 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. 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>				
38	<p>Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation should take immediate action to ensure their staff 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. CQC is working to ensure that all staff inspecting children's services are suitably experienced and qualified by setting clear criteria for their involvement. HMIC currently has a small of 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</p>				

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		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. 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.				
39	The Department of Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children 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.	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.				
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.				
41	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children 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.				
42	Ofsted should focus its evaluation of Serious Case Reviews on the depth of the learning a review has provided and the quality of the 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.				
43	The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise Working Together to Safeguard Children 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.				
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.				

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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.				
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.				
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.				
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.				
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.				
	<b>Organisation and Finance</b>					
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.				
51	The Children's Trust and the Local Safeguard 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.				
52	Local Safeguarding Children Boards should include membership from the senior decision makers from all safeguarding partners, who should attend regularly and	To be reflected in revised regulations and revised <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> guidance.				



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	be full involved as equal partners in Local Safeguarding Decision making.					
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.				
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.				
55	The Department for Children, Schools and Families must sufficiently resource children's services to ensure that early intervention and preventative service 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).				
56	A national annual report should be published reviewing safeguarding and child protection spends 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.				
	<b>Legal</b>					
57	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	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				

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	cases where these delays are not in the interests of the child.	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.				
<b>58</b>	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.	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. 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.				