



Department
for Education

The Child Protection Authority

Government consultation

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Respond by 5 March 2026

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Secretary of State Foreword

Children's safety and security is one of the most important responsibilities of any government. Security is the foundation of opportunity, and the government's determination to extend opportunity to all our young people means that keeping children safe is central to our ambition.

As a young woman, I saw for myself how important this is when I ran a refuge for women and children in the North East. I witnessed what happens when as a society we fail to protect our most vulnerable members.

Today, many years later, I am sorry to say that England's child protection system still fails too many children. Repeated systemic shortcomings have exposed our children to sickening abuse. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) revealed a system of national oversight that was too fragmented, too inconsistent, too lacking in accountability to keep our children safe.

It's not good enough and we are determined to bring change. What our children need is not more empty promises, nor more reports that are strong on sentiment but weak on action. They deserve a government that does whatever it takes to keep them safe. Today they have that government; today the time for tinkering has passed; today the time has come for us to be bold and decisive.

Along with my Cabinet colleagues from the Home Office, the Department for Health and Social Care and the Ministry of Justice, I am proud to outline our plans for this country's new Child Protection Authority (CPA). With it, we will mark the start of a new era of stronger safeguards and better protection for our children.

The CPA will be the keystone of a coherent, child-centred and expert-led national child protection system. It will have the expertise to identify harms, the authority to challenge poor practice, and the power to drive change across the system. Through top-class multi-agency working, we will intervene earlier, act on what works and put right what doesn't. We will work tirelessly to protect children from the darkest corners of our society – and to rebuild the trust that has been lost.

Any system of child protection that hopes to improve must listen first and foremost to victims and survivors. Their voices are at the centre of the process to set up the CPA. We have worked closely with victims and survivors, children and young people, sector experts and former chair of the IICSA. And we will continue to listen to them in the future too.

Their voices are crucial because meaningful reform doesn't come from departments or councils, hospitals or schools working alone. Nor will it come from changes brought by one department unless the whole of government is behind the push for

change. Instead, we will listen together and unite to lift the life chances of all our children.

The CPA will work through and with the government's missions for the renewal of our country. It will complement efforts to make the NHS fit for the future and through the 10-Year Health Plan. It will work hand-in-hand with the Safer Streets mission, joining forces with the new National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection. And it will be fundamental for our Opportunity mission.

As a government we want to pass on to the next generations a country in which every child has the chance to succeed. We want our children to grow up in strong communities, safe from harm and free to enjoy the wonders of childhood. But the work to build a better future is never easy. It requires that we confront hard truths about our past and admit where we as a society simply haven't done enough.

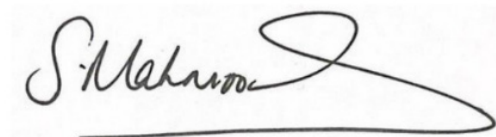
In setting up the CPA we won't shy away from difficult conversations. We want to gather views from across society. That's why we are proud to launch this consultation, and we invite views from children, families, practitioners and the public.

To everyone contributing their views, but to victims and survivors above all, we have a simple message: you will be heard, we will act, and together we'll build the safer society our children deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women & Equalities

This consultation is supported by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Mahmood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, Secretary of State for Home Office

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wes Streeting". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP, Secretary of State for the Department for Health and
Social Care

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Rt Hon David Lammy, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice and
Deputy Prime Minister

Executive Summary

The Child Protection Authority is being established to tackle three persistent challenges faced by the child protection system:

- The system is fragmented and lacks strong leadership and coordination at the national level. The lack of national oversight results in missed opportunities to anticipate emerging harms or respond proactively to new risks. It also means that data that exists in different parts of the system is not consistently reviewed to identify trends or evidence gaps. This leaves the system reactive rather than strategic.
- Despite there being evidence of good practice across the country, this is not consistently shared or embedded. When effective approaches are identified, they do not always spread across agencies or feed into expectations of child protection practice across our workforces. This undermines our ability to improve and strengthen expertise.
- Learning is not consistently translating into improvement. Despite repeated findings in national and local reviews, the same weaknesses recur. There is no single body with the authority and agility to intervene, drive change, and hold organisations to account. Recommendations are not tracked and impact on outcomes is rarely measured, meaning poor practice can persist and children remain exposed to avoidable harm.

To address these challenges, we propose to establish the Child Protection Authority (CPA) with three core sets of functions:

- It will provide national oversight and system leadership, using varied data sources to identify emerging risks and advise on policy.
- It will promote and embed good practice, supporting local areas to implement what works and sharing resources through a national digital platform.
- It will drive improvement and accountability, ensuring recommendations lead to measurable change and advising on inspection and regulatory activity.

And as we move forwards with the design and delivery of the CPA we will be guided by clear design principles. The CPA will be:

- evidence-based and child-centred, ensuring that no child is ever blamed for the abuse they suffer and that all actions reflect children's rights and voices.
- multi-agency and collaborative, complementing existing statutory roles rather than duplicating them.
- authoritative and decisive, trusted to act when poor practice persists and to provide credible, practical guidance.
- intelligence-led, using data and learning to anticipate risks.

- focused on balancing national consistency with local sensitivity, adapting evidence-based practice to local contexts while maintaining high standards.
- a model of continuous learning and improvement, promoting a culture of sector-led development across the child protection system.

Through these functions and principles, the CPA will fill critical gaps in national leadership alongside local learning and accountability, helping to ensure that every child is better protected from harm.

Introduction

The Child Protection Authority ('CPA') was one of the lead recommendations from the final report from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('IICSA'). In April 2025, government committed to consulting on a road map to establishing a CPA by the end of 2025. We said then that the aim of establishing a CPA would be to make the child protection system clearer, more unified and ensure there is ongoing improvement through effective evidence-based support.

This consultation seeks views on the scope, functions and powers of the CPA and will inform the establishment of this new body.

Who this is for

- Frontline practitioners including but not limited to: those working in children's services, the police, health, youth justice, probation and education.
- Safeguarding partnerships.
- Voluntary and community sector organisations working with children and families.
- Inspectorates and regulatory bodies with a role in child protection.
- Organisations and sector bodies who provide improvement training and support.
- Families with lived experience of the child protection system, and their networks.
- Anyone else who cares about improving child protection.

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 11th December 2025.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on:

- ChildProtectionAuthority.CONSULTATION@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: coordinator.consultations@education.gov.uk, telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) in Summer 2026.

About this consultation

This consultation invites views on the proposed scope, functions and powers of the CPA and will inform the establishment of this new body. The first chapter of this consultation sets out the vision for a successful multi-agency child protection system.

This consultation will be open to the public for twelve weeks. Alongside this consultation, we will be working with children and young people as well as victims and survivors of abuse to seek their views on our proposals.

The Department for Education is inviting views through four main sections of this consultation on:

- The overview, scope and design principles of the CPA
- Proposals for how the CPA will provide leadership and oversight of the child protection system.
- Proposals for how the CPA will provide system learning and support.
- Proposals for how the CPA will drive system improvement in the child protection system.
- Proposals for how the CPA will be structured and engage with other organisations.

Respond online, or by email

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/consultations) to submit your response.

ChildProtectionAuthority.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request an alternative format of the form.

Deadline

The consultation closes on 5th March 2026.

Chapter 1: Our vision of a successful multi-agency child protection system

The role of child protection in delivering this government's missions

A successful multi-agency child protection system has a role to play in this government's opportunity, health and safer streets missions. It is critical to:

- breaking down health inequalities and delivering the healthiest generation of children ever with a key role to play in the shift to neighbourhood health and sickness prevention;
- reducing serious harm by halving knife crime and violence against women and girls (VAWG) ; and
- giving every child the best life chances right from the start to enable them to grow up safe and thriving.

Together, these contributions demonstrate that child protection is a foundational pillar in achieving this government's broader missions.

Child Protection

England has a well-established child protection system which protects children every day. Much of this work goes unnoticed by the wider public as skilled practitioners protect children, young people and babies and support them and their families to achieve and thrive. This system has grown and developed over the years, building on increasing strengths and learning from weaknesses.

Our multi-agency child protection system is designed to support those who are experiencing or are likely to experience significant harm, and it should be there for every child who needs it across all protected characteristics, as laid out in the 2010 Equality Act, as well as those facing socio-economic disparities. This applies wherever and in whatever circumstances a child lives, including those already under the care of the state and in kinship care, and across all harm types – including those within the family, from outside the home and online. When we refer to children, both in this document and in the child protection system, we mean from pre-birth to the transition into adulthood.

We must never ignore the significant harm that some children suffer in their families, homes, institutions, communities and online nor the ongoing persistence of certain challenges the child protection system is yet to overcome:

- The system is fragmented and often lacks strong leadership at co-ordination, including at the national level. There are limited mechanisms or opportunities for the child protection system to be proactive to emerging harms and risks which affect children. At a national level, there is not always a consistent process for reviewing multi-agency child protection data and identifying evidence gaps (we have set out proposals in Chapter 3 to meet these challenges)
- Good practice is not always easy to find or sufficiently disseminated, undermining our ability to learn, improve and bolster expertise. When good practice is shared, it is not always embedded across the system and training for practitioners is not reflective of good practice and learning (we have set out proposals in Chapter 4 to meet these challenges)

Learning is not leading to improvement at all levels. Across the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's ('the Panel') annual reports, Serious Incident Notifications, Rapid Reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and inspection reports, there are repeatedly similar findings and practice challenges. There is no national body with the authority and agility to respond swiftly, drive improvement and hold organisations to account. No dedicated organisation to intervene, convene, and support where needed, meaning poor practice can go unchallenged for too long. There is also a lack of mechanisms for tracking whether recommendations have been implemented and whether these interventions are leading to the desired impact and change (we have set out proposals in Chapter 5 to meet these challenges)

Previous attempts at reform have led to some improvement but positive change resulting from them has been hindered because the reforms have:

- Been incremental, single-issue initiatives with insufficient funding. Reforms have been too small-scale, narrow or reactive and not backed by sustainable funding or a clear, long-term vision and accountability framework. This means reforms have lacked direction and consistency across the country. This has resulted in continuing systemic issues and poor system design which has not embedded lasting change.
- Lacked a focus on supporting all those who work in child protection and not dealt with their lack of time and space for reflective, child-centred practice, or regular quality supervision. This hampers efforts to promote professional curiosity and has prevented practitioners from developing, and having confidence in, their expertise to deliver meaningful support.
- Supported multi-agency working but agencies still struggle to share information and act in the spirit of multi-agency working.
- Not focused on the growing proportion of section 47 enquiries that do not result in an initial child protection conference. It is right that where a local authority suspects actual or likely significant harm they must act quickly.

However, the significant and widening gap between section 47 enquiries and initial child protection conferences could suggest that some families, where there is complex needs and risk but not this threshold of harm, need help and support below this much higher level of state intervention.

- Not looked sufficiently at the quality of placements for, and experiences of, looked after children.

Collectively this means practitioners and systems from different organisations don't always work well together, information is not shared, practitioners at all levels are not always clear on their role or accountability, and decisive action is not always taken. As a result, children who have suffered from some of the most abhorrent abuses are then failed again by those who are meant to keep them safe and the finite resources in the system are not used on the most effective interventions. This happens more often for some children if they live in poverty, institutional settings or are in the care system.

This government is committed to ensuring the system responds better when children are let down, so that children receive the protection and support they deserve. We will achieve this through cross-government reforms to tackle abuse and our large-scale investment in Children's Social Care. The Child Protection Authority is a cornerstone of this as we work towards a more nationally coherent and expert-led child protection system.

Our vision of a successful multi-agency child protection system

A successful multi-agency child protection system is one in which *preventable* significant harm and death is non-existent. This is aspirational but it is our duty to be ambitious for all children. It is certainly far from easy. It requires humility, vigilance and a commitment to continuously improve. We all want a system which best serves children and families. This system is one which we can confidently say is:

- Expert: practitioners are knowledgeable, focused, skilled, experienced and empowered to make the right decisions, work together and provide the right support and protection to children;
- Accurate: using data effectively and focusing efforts on actual or likely significant harm;
- Decisive: the right action is taken at the right time to protect children and
- Genuinely multi-agency: everyone knows their role and plays their part to support the range of children and families' needs.

The accountability system needs to prioritise these features too.

Children's Social Care Reform

The child protection system forms part of this country's Children's Social Care system. This protects children every day but it is also a system that is under pressure from rising demand and costs with inconsistent experiences that require investment and reform. The reforms being delivered by this government draw on a wealth of evidence of strong practice from local areas and national programmes and learn from the mistakes of reforms of the past by being:

- Whole-system focussed;
- Backed by significant investment particularly in family help;
- Clear on the outcomes it wants to achieve;
- Multi-agency with a focus on workforce capacity and capability;
- Focused on quantity and quality of placements for looked after children.

Whole system alignment

Success relies on an aligned whole system approach in which roles and responsibilities are clear. We will continue to develop this building up from the key pillars of:

- The Children's Social Care National Framework (statutory guidance) which sets out the purpose of children's social care and the outcomes the system should achieve;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance) which sets out the clear roles and responsibilities of a multi-agency safeguarding and child protection system;
- DfE commissioned Practice Guides that provide the evidence base for the most effective interventions;
- Listening to children and people with lived experience, including through DfE's Children and Young People's Board and the Home Office-led Victims and Survivors Panel; and
- An inspection and accountability regime that reflects all the above.

Delivering the support and protection children and families need, when they need it will take us closer to our vision of an England in which all children live in safe, loving and thriving families.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

Subject to parliamentary approval, our landmark legislation in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill intends to see more children remain with their families

where it is safe to do so. Where it is not, more children should be living in kinship arrangements and where that is not possible in foster families. The Bill intends to strengthen support for all children in care and care leavers, including by rolling out the 'Staying Close' programme, which supports care leavers to remain connected to their support networks. It also intends to strengthen multi-agency approaches to support families and keep children safe (including those children where there are protection concerns and are being home educated) and fix the broken care market by tackling profiteering and enhancing Ofsted's powers in its regulation.

Significant investment throughout this Spending Review period

The multiyear Settlement now makes available over £2.4 billion for the Families First Programme for children's social care prevention reform. This includes for Family Help, which will embed multi-disciplinary teams in the heart of communities to wrap support around families at the earliest point, helping them to overcome challenges and keep more children safely at home. This includes additional funding of £547 million over the three years of the Settlement – all ringfenced for spend on prevention and de-escalation. This settlement builds on the Spending Review 2025 and will deliver initiatives including:

- our social care commitments within the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill,
- continue our investment in the Families First Partnership Programme,
- deliver foster care reforms and
- deliver the Kinship Financial Allowance Pilot.

Workforce and multi-agency working

An expert multi-agency child protection workforce is critical to this, characterised by the multi-agency child protection standards set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.¹ Most importantly this includes a relentless focus on understanding the child's daily life which is underpinned by curious information seeking and sharing across agencies.

¹ [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) is that Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children.

This will be supported by a new Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role working alongside Family Help Lead Practitioners and embedded in multi-agency child protection teams (MACPTs).

Strengthening frontline child protection practice is the single most important aim of establishing the new LCPP role in MACPTs. These reforms will help ensure that those with the highest levels of child protection expertise and experience are working in these most complex and challenging roles in which children are facing actual or likely significant harm. They will be underpinned by support for the social worker workforce through the national graduate training programme and better quality professional development, including a new induction programme and new post-qualifying standards for Advanced Child Protection Practice. We will also be delivering specialist child sexual abuse and exploitation training for social workers and other key members of the children's services workforce.

Bringing experts together into multi-agency teams will ensure that child protection practitioners from social care, police, education and health are working as a team on a day-to-day basis to provide robust critical thinking and challenge to each other to help ensure the right decisions are made at the right time for children to keep them safe.

Accountability

Alongside a continued focus on a sector-led improvement for local authorities and statutory safeguarding partnerships we will continue the work set out in the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse: progress update to strengthen single and joint inspection of child protection.² As part of this, the new Opportunity Mission Keeping Children Safe ministerial board will receive updates on multi-agency inspection and accountability reports to inform actions it needs to take to improve child protection accountability and follow up activity.

Strengthening protection for children in care

Children in care are particularly vulnerable and while being in care should be keeping them safe, this isn't consistently the case.³ We know that there are vulnerabilities for children who live in residential care settings, and for those who are

² [Tackling child sexual abuse: progress update \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

³ 'Children in care' refers to all children whose care is being provided by the local authority

placed a long way from their communities and families. We need to ensure that children are safe both where they live, and within the wider community that they live in.

Quality standards, national minimum standards, and regulations exist to ensure children are kept safe, including within their foster families, kinship care or children's homes. Where incidents occur in any care settings the same standards of social care, inspection, health, police, justice (and other) response apply as they do anywhere else. A multi-agency, multi-disciplinary response is needed to immediately protect the child and support them going forwards, and to investigate, resolve and hold to account the setting/provider.

To begin work to better protect children in care, subject to Parliament, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will amend the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 to extend protection to 16 and 17 year olds from ill treatment or wilful neglect from care workers. We also want to ensure that care providers are held to proper account and can be prosecuted for offences committed against 16 and 17 year olds in regulated care establishments. This will be supported by:

- The rollout of regional care cooperatives.
- Provision of advocacy to help guide those in care through the system and ensure it works for them; and
- Updates to the joint DfE-DHSC statutory guidance on promoting the health and wellbeing of children in care and extending this to care leavers up to the age of 25.

However, Baroness Casey's audit on group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse⁴ is just the most recent report to have highlighted that more is needed to better prevent and respond effectively to harms for children in care. Baroness Casey's audit and others make it clear that this needs to include better responses to the impact of vulnerabilities which exacerbate harm or the likelihood of harm (e.g. when Looked After Children are moved out of area, have a lack of trusted relationships or have special education needs and/or disabilities), harms in their home, and extra-familial harms. Tackling this is a priority for this government.

⁴ [National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse - GOV.UK](#)

The Child Protection Authority

The final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ('IICSA') recommended the establishment of a Child Protection Authority (CPA) in both England and Wales. The Inquiry identified significant gaps in national oversight, coordination, and accountability within the child protection system, and called for a new body to drive improvement, promote best practice, and ensure that children are better protected from harm. In April 2025, the Government committed to publishing a consultation on a roadmap towards establishing a Child Protection Authority in England. The Welsh Government accepted the recommendation in principle and considered that the existing National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB) and existing inspectorates cover most of the functions proposed in the IICSA recommendation. The Welsh Government is considering this recommendation as part of their wider safeguarding reforms, which includes a 10-year strategy for Preventing and Responding to child sexual abuse (2026–2036) aiming to strengthen prevention, protection, and support systems and a Strengthening Safeguarding Governance Review which was announced by the Minister for Children and Social Care on 2 October. Welsh Government have appointed an independent reviewer to consider the effectiveness of the current core governance structures in Wales including the National Independent Safeguarding Board, Regional Safeguarding Boards and Inspectorates. The review will explore the functions and interrelationships between these bodies and identify opportunities to further strengthen. This is phase one of the review: phase two will include a more detailed examination of safeguarding arrangements in education. Phase one is due to conclude in March 2026 and it is likely that further areas will be identified that will require more detailed examination.

As set out above, we have identified a number of persistent challenges facing the child protection system. To address these, the CPA's proposed role will centre it in an aligned national system of multi-agency child protection, supporting the journey to a comprehensively expert, accurate and decisive system. This consultation will go into further detail on the functions of the CPA:

- Chapter 2 will set out the proposed vision for how the CPA will fit into the child protection landscape. It sets out the scope of the CPA, who it will serve, and gives detail on the work of the Panel.
- Chapter 3 sets out how the CPA will provide national oversight and system leadership. It will be able to identify emerging harms and trends using national data, enabling proactive responses and anticipating threats. The CPA will be able to synthesise insights, by tracking recommendations and advising on systemic policy issues.

- Chapter 4 sets out how the CPA will support the system learning and promote and embed good practice. It will support local areas to embed what works, remove barriers, and facilitate multi-agency sector-led learning. The CPA will share findings via a national digital platform offering training, resources, and implementation support.
- Chapter 5 will explore how the CPA can drive system improvements and ensure local areas are acting on recommendations. It will be able to advise on inspection and regulatory activity, and will have strong relationships with relevant bodies to implement change and hold national and local partners to account.

The CPA will be judged by its ability to:

- Reduce preventable significant harm and deaths.
- Drive continuous improvement across agencies and government.
- Hold national and local partners to account with real authority.
- Embed learning from incidents and ensure it leads to change.
- Unite fragmented efforts into a coherent, effective child protection system.

The CPA will be a cornerstone of a more coherent, expert-led national child protection system. Its success will depend on strong leadership, joined-up governance and a relentless focus on learning and improvement. It will be central in an aligned national system and its proposed role and functions, set out in this consultation document, need to be considered in the context of the wider national infrastructure already established and our vision for the future set out above.

Chapter 2: Child Protection Authority Overview

How will the CPA improve the Child Protection System?

The CPA will have three core functions: providing system leadership and national oversight, promoting and embedding good practice and driving improvement and accountability in multi-agency child protection.

The CPA will use its unique position overseeing and providing system leadership of child protection at a national level to make recommendations to local agencies and national government on the direction and focus of child protection policy. Continual identification of emerging risks to children through horizon scanning will also allow the CPA to identify trends so that they can be responded to promptly.⁵

It will build on and absorb the role of the Panel in making recommendations for policy and practice change, identifying good practice, and sharing learning. Alongside promoting and embedding learning and evidence-based practice, it will highlight and tackle racial and socio-economic disparities, guided by insights such as the Panel's report ["It's Silent": Race, racism and safeguarding children – Panel Briefing 4](#). Its leadership must reflect the diversity of the communities it serves.

It will drive continuous improvement by working to ensure recommendations lead to measurable change and advising on inspection and regulatory activity.

To monitor impact, the CPA will report into the new Keeping Children Safe Ministerial Board. The CPA will use its intelligence to report critical issues to the Board to support government action being taken to address harms faced by children.

Scope of the Child Protection Authority

To ensure the CPA is understood by organisations, practitioners, and families, its scope must be clearly defined. According to *Working Together to Safeguard Children*^[OBJ], child protection refers to actions taken to protect individual children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm. As part of its national oversight role, the CPA needs to be focused on both learning and disseminating the

⁵ Horizon scanning- The structured process of identifying emerging risks, systemic issues, and future trends across the child protection system. It involves analysing data and insights from diverse sources (e.g. reviews, inspections, practitioner feedback, research) to anticipate threats and inform proactive responses. A full glossary of terms can be found at the end of this document.

lessons learned from situations where children have been harmed in the past whilst reducing as much as possible the number of children who are harmed in the future.

The CPA's work, output and focus will be on children who are experiencing or likely to experience significant harm. These children may or may not already be known to services.

Significant harm includes those who experience harm in their own family and those who are harmed or exploited by others, including by other children, in their community, in institutions and/or online. Any child or young person, no matter who they live with, can experience significant harm. This includes children who live with their families, family network or kinship carers, and children in care.

Suffering or being likely to suffer significant harm can take different forms, including sexual, physical or emotional abuse, neglect or domestic abuse (including controlling or coercive behaviour), child criminal exploitation, trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation. Children may suffer these harms concurrently.

The CPA's focus will be in particular on those children facing the most severe, most enduring and frequent abuse, threat, coercion, or cruelty recognising the cumulative impact of adverse events.

The CPA will be key to protecting as many children as we can. Getting multi-agency child protection right is essential to protect the most vulnerable children;

- children on interim care orders or placed at home with parents
- looked after children
- children being exploited by people outside of their home
- children who go missing
- children who are trafficked
- children being sexually or criminally targeted by their family, relations, friends and groups
- children who are harmed online
- children in intimate relationships
- children who have vulnerabilities (e.g. disabilities)

Who will the Child Protection Authority serve?

The CPA will be established to serve children likely to experience or experiencing significant harm or abuse wherever this occurs. Primarily, this will be through high quality evidenced-based learning for practitioners and through support for safeguarding partnerships and other organisations to ensure all parts of the system

are working as effectively as possible. It will support families, carers, practitioners who work with children, and local communities. The CPA will play a critical role in ensuring the voices of those who have experienced and are reliant on the child protection system are heard and elevated.

Geographic Scope

The CPA will operate across England, ensuring consistency in child protection standards and responses. The Welsh Government is considering the recommendation on a CPA for Wales as part of their wider safeguarding reforms, including the 10-year strategy for Preventing and Responding to child sexual abuse (2026–2036).

The CPA will work in partnership with safeguarding partnerships to tailor responses and interventions to local contexts. The CPA will work in partnership with central government departments, inspectorates and other national bodies to ensure that national work to strengthen child protection in England is as effective and joined up as possible.

Work of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

The Panel plays a vital role in improving child safeguarding practice across England. Established under the Children Act 2004, the Panel operates independently and identifies and reviews serious child safeguarding cases that raise complex issues or are of national importance.

Under Section 16B of the Act, the Panel has the statutory authority to:

- Identify any improvements that should be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Commission and oversee reviews of these cases to extract learning and drive improvements in practice.
- Promote the welfare of children by supporting learning from serious incidents - the purpose of reviews is to identify any improvements that should be made by safeguarding partners or others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The panel must provide the reports to the Secretary of State for Education and must ensure that reports are published (unless inappropriate to, where it must publish information about the improvements that should be made, as appropriate).

Section 16C of the Act requires local authorities to notify the Panel of serious incidents involving children, including cases of death or serious harm where abuse or neglect is known or suspected. Those notifications are then followed up by local Safeguarding Partnerships with rapid reviews which analyse all of the background to the incident and identify key learning. Those rapid reviews, and the Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews that may follow them, come to Panel for consideration and in an average month the Panel will receive, read and respond to about 40 reviews. These notifications and reviews help the Panel to maintain a unique overview of the most serious incidents, the cumulative learning and emerging and persistent issues. In exceptional cases the Panel can also decide to conduct a national review.

In exercising its powers, the Panel maintains a pool of qualified reviewers and publishes findings from its reviews to inform policy, practice, and professional development. Its independence ensures that safeguarding failures are examined transparently and that recommendations are made without political or institutional bias.

Through its statutory powers and national oversight, the Panel serves as a cornerstone of the safeguarding system, helping to ensure that children across England are better protected from harm.

Work to bolster the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to transition to the Child Protection Authority

In April 2025, we outlined that the CPA will build on and evolve from the work of the Panel. Subject to legislation, the intention is for the CPA to absorb the functions of the Panel. This will ensure there is continued focus on learning from serious incidents alongside broader child protection knowledge and evidence, best practice and failings.

But we are not waiting until the passing of legislation to strengthen the role and impact of the Panel. That is why, as we announced in April, we are already building the analytical capacity and impact of the Panel's work. We are doing this through seven key areas which align with the proposals for the CPA:

System learning and support:

- Development of an online learning hub, to share easy-to-understand materials for frontline teams, training resources, and to provide quick access to current child protection expertise. A Panel website will be mobilised quickly as a platform for dissemination and this is expected to go live in spring 2026.

- Providing easy-to-understand data insights to those working to protect children to ensure learning from current cases goes beyond the individual safeguarding partnerships involved. Development of a new case management system, already underway, will also support this with benefits starting to be realised from 2026;
- Reviewing policy and procedures to ensure practitioners are supported with clear, practical guidance for identifying learning from serious incidents. This includes updates to Working Together on Panel's role, consulted on in the autumn and due to be published Spring 2026.
- A new more interactive and collaborative approach to sharing panel learning and insight through much greater use of a range of different communications techniques: e.g. Webinars, short briefings, infographics etc. This has already begun and will accelerate in 2026.
- A more active and collaborative approach to encouraging the identification and sharing of knowledge and resources generated by others e.g. by safeguarding partnerships, this is also beginning now and will accelerate in 2026.
- A more collaborative approach to triangulating and acting upon knowledge about emerging themes and issues in child protection by actively seeking closer liaison and information exchange with government departments, inspectorates, research institutions, professional bodies, safeguarding partnerships etc. This is also beginning now.

Driving system improvement in the child protection system:

- More efficient case processing and analysis to quickly identify and share lessons from current cases, using a new case management system that builds an evidence database. This will track cases all the way through from Serious Incident Notification and Rapid Reviews to Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

This coordinated programme of work to strengthen the role and impact of the Panel will help us to explore in real time some of the potential functions of a CPA while work continues in parallel to establish the CPA itself.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the scope of the CPA? [Yes/No] If not, what would you add, delete or amend?
- 2) How else might the Panel develop its role to help explore potential CPA functions in the interim period while the CPA is being consulted on and created?
- 3) The cross government VAWG Strategy is due to be published shortly. The strategy will set out how we will halve VAWG in a decade – as well as the further measures we will take to support the victims and tackle the perpetrators. What more could we do to make sure that the design of the CPA will contribute to the work to tackle VAWG?

Chapter 3: System Leadership & National Oversight

Leadership of the Child Protection System

Background

Strong national leadership is essential to drive consistent improvement, accountability, and coordination across the child protection system. The system is fragmented and often lacks coordination, particularly at the national level. There is currently no single national mechanism to ensure that learning is shared across the system or that recommendations from local and national multi-agency and single agency reviews, inquiries, and reports are systematically captured, synthesised, and acted upon.

The recent 'Review of patient safety across the health and care landscape' by Dr Penny Dash found that there were a high number of recommendations being made to the NHS, most of which lack any cost-benefit analysis recommended. The review recommended better co-ordination and prioritisation of the very many recommendations and 'asks' of providers. In the Child Protection System, local areas also find it hard to prioritise recommendations particularly as these are not often subject to cost-benefit analysis, and inconsistent tracking and implementation leads to gaps in accountability, coordination, and improvement across the child protection system.

There is also a growing need for greater national focus on new and developing risks facing children and families, including those emerging from digital environments, and complex social contexts. Without a central body to lead, monitor, and support improvement, the child protection system struggles to respond effectively, proactively and together to these challenges. This includes understanding which recommendations to prioritise and adopt, learning from Dr Penny Dash's review.

Proposal

The CPA is being established to address these issues. By providing national leadership of the whole child protection system means it will:

- Track and monitor the implementation of recommendations from safeguarding reviews, serious incidents, and inquiries to create a system-wide picture of child protection practice across England.
- Triangulate information to identify systemic risks and emerging trends.
- Produce cost-benefit analysis for the recommendations it makes and support local areas to prioritise recommendations.

- Assess the implementation and impact of recommendations at local and national level.
- Support existing inspectorates and regulatory bodies.
- Advise government on systemic risks and improvements, supported by cost-benefit analysis and alignment with existing reform programmes.
- Be a national leader in multi-agency child protection practices.
- Publish annual reports to Parliament, providing a national overview of child protection progress and challenges. This would include reporting on recommendations the CPA has made to address persistent or significant failings such as advising Secretaries of State to inform single or multi-agency inspection and other regulatory activity.

Rationale

The CPA will be the national leader of an aligned and collaborative multi-agency child protection system. This proposal responds to the need for a coordinated national mechanism to track and monitor the implementation of improvement recommendations. It addresses longstanding concerns about the lack of follow-through on child protection learning at both national and local levels.

The CPA will complement, not duplicate, the work of existing inspectorates and regulatory bodies, ensuring its role strengthens rather than fragments the system. It will work closely with safeguarding partnerships, government departments, and lived experience panels to ensure its work is grounded in practice and informed by those most affected.

By supporting strategic planning, national policy development, and continuous improvement, the CPA will help build a more coherent, responsive, and accountable child protection system.

Case Study: Prevention of Future Deaths (PFDs) Reports and the Need for Oversight

Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) reports are issued by coroners, in relation to an investigation into a death, where they believe action could be taken to prevent future deaths. These reports aim to ensure that lessons are learned from a death and are sent to individuals or organisations that the coroner considers best placed to take the necessary action. There is a statutory requirement to respond to the coroner within 56 days (or any extended period authorised by the coroner), and all late responses are listed on the Chief Coroner's website.

Many government departments have developed systems to respond to these reports and embed learning within their organisations. To better support this work, those departments which receive a significant number of PFD reports have established a cross-government network to share best practice and strengthen collaboration.

Relevance to the CPA: The CPA could play a similar role by systematically tracking safeguarding recommendations from reviews and inquiries, ensuring clear visibility and robust accountability for action. This includes ensuring follow-through on commitments whilst also considering how it can mitigate the issues identified through its own role as an organisation focused on sharing learning and driving improvements across the child protection system.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) How should the CPA advise government on systemic risks and emerging themes in child protection? [Free Text]

Horizon scanning

Background

The child protection system lacks a coordinated national mechanism to anticipate and respond to emerging risks from varied and diverse sources. While valuable information exists across local reviews, safeguarding reports, academic research, and practitioner insight, it is often siloed, underused, and disconnected from strategic

decision-making. This fragmentation limits the system's ability to identify new threats, such as those arising from digital environments, or complex social contexts, and to act on them in a timely, informed way. Without a central authority to synthesise information and advise government locally and nationally, child protection remains reactive rather than preventative, and opportunities to strengthen safety are missed.

Proposal

As well as maintaining oversight of national and local reviews, the CPA will be able to identify emerging threats through monitoring varied information sources, including:

- Existing and emerging national level data on Children in Need, and the child protection system and harms across multi-agency data sets
- Safeguarding partnerships yearly reports
- Research from government, professional bodies and academic expertise, both nationally and internationally
- Insight from children, families, and practitioners via targeted engagement and existing feedback channels.

An example of how the CPA would use the information it receives to effectively horizon scan for emerging risks is the rise in online harms. If, through horizon scanning, the CPA identified a sharp rise in reports of online grooming via a new social media platform, it could:

- Alert safeguarding partners and government to the trend;
- Convene a taskforce with tech companies, central government, statutory safeguarding partners and schools to develop a coordinated response
- Issue guidance to practitioners and parents on new risks
- Inform policy development on digital safety and regulation

Rationale

Horizon scanning will help the system be more prepared as new harms and sophisticated ways of abusing children emerge. This horizon scanning function will be grounded in practice, informed by diverse perspectives, and responsive to change to strengthen national capacity to protect children from emerging threats.

Questions

1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will horizon scan?

[Yes/ No/ If no, why?]

2) Do you agree that a national body should monitor diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection? [Yes/ No/ If no, why]

Data and Analytical Expertise

Background

The child protection system generates large volumes of data, but it is often inconsistently collected and underused at both local and national level. There are significant barriers to information sharing between safeguarding partners, which means systemic trends and issues are often unidentified, and it can be difficult to track performance and improvement. There is also insufficient national oversight of how data is used to drive improvement, with wide variation in practice across local authorities and other local agencies and limited mechanisms to interrogate or act on child protection data. Recommendation 9 from Baroness Casey's National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse highlighted the urgent need for improved data interrogation, consistency, and accountability in how serious incident information is used. Alongside this consultation, we have today published an open letter to Safeguarding Partners and an ad hoc data release regarding child protection data on child sexual abuse and exploitation, as we committed to in response to Baroness Casey's findings and recommendation.

Proposal

The CPA would address these problems by:

- Analysing national and local level data to identify patterns, gaps, and mismatches in child protection practices, and support coherence across the system.
- Having expert functions in data analytics, AI, and predictive tools to support early identification of child protection concerns.
- Producing thematic reports and dashboards to inform policy, practice, and public accountability
- Making evidence-based recommendations to government and safeguarding bodies based on data management.

- Driving improvements in data collection by supporting the [Childrens Social Care Data Strategy](#) and the Childrens Social Care and Digital Centre of Excellence.
- Working collaboratively with government data and analytical teams to strengthen national data standards.
- Using statutory powers to compel the sharing of information from safeguarding partnerships, drawing on models such as the Children's Commissioner's powers.

The CPA will not manage or handle identifiable child level data, unless relevant to reviewing reports.

Rationale

This proposal supports government priorities on transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and system-wide improvement in child protection. The CPA's information gathering and analytical capabilities will help identify systemic risks early, inform targeted interventions, and provide a robust evidence base to advise action from inspectorates, departments, and safeguarding partners. It supports existing activity in the Children's Social Care Reform agenda and will support effective implementation of reforms at both local and national levels, aligning with the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and broader child protection priorities. By working closely with safeguarding partnerships and existing data infrastructures at both local and national levels, the CPA will help overcome fragmentation and promote joined-up working.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) Are the data sources set out above the right ones for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 3) How can the CPA ensure its data and intelligence work complements local efforts and avoids duplication with existing systems and responsibilities? [Free Text]
- 4) What types of national reports, dashboards, or analytical products would be most useful to practitioners and policymakers? [Free Text]

Identifying and Addressing Evidence Gaps

Background

A key function of the CPA will be identifying and addressing gaps in knowledge, practice, and coordination. This includes improving visibility of where risks are emerging, where responses are inconsistent, and where children and families are not receiving the support they need. The CPA will draw on data, lived experience, frontline insight, and research to build a clearer picture of system-wide challenges and promote evidence-informed solutions. By doing so, it will help ensure that evidence gaps are identified, interventions are targeted, and improvements are sustained across local and national levels.

Proposal

- Establish a dedicated research and insight function within the CPA to identify and address evidence gaps at national level.

Commission and convene research in collaboration with expert organisations, including What Works Centres and centres of expertise to avoid duplication.

- Identify priority research areas through data analysis and stakeholder engagement, focusing on underreported or poorly understood risks.
- Embed lived experience by involving children, families, and victims/survivors in shaping research questions, especially in culturally specific contexts.
- Partner with academic institutions and expert bodies to ensure high-quality, ethical research.
- Translate findings into system level insights to inform future policy, commissioning and strategic planning.

Rationale

This proposal responds to longstanding concerns about the fragmentation and underutilisation of research in child protection. Despite a growing evidence base, research is often disconnected from frontline practice, inconsistently applied, and lacks visibility across the system.

The CPA will address this gap by coordinating research efforts, identifying priority gaps and translating findings into actionable guidance. This aligns with national priorities to improve evidence-based practice and supports the CPA's broader role in system learning and improvement.

Questions

1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]

Chapter 4: System learning and support

Promote and Embed Good Practice

Background

It is important to acknowledge that there is already a wealth of excellent practice taking place across the child protection system. However, good practice is not consistently shared or embedded across the system. Despite repeated recommendations from national reviews, learning does not reliably lead to improvement at all levels. Similarly to recommendations from serious case reviews, there is a lack of infrastructure to support the embedding, dissemination and application of learning. Safeguarding partners often face resource constraints and practical barriers that hinder the adoption of evidence-based practices. Opportunities for multi-agency learning, peer exchange and reflection on good practice, reviews and inspections are limited.

Proposal

- Create a national learning platform to promote effective child protection, offering access to resources and insights that reflect diverse local needs and practices.

Commission research and collaborate with expert bodies (e.g. Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre), National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection, What Works Centres) to develop evidence-based resources, training modules, that can be adapted by local partners as needed.

- Enable peer learning and cross-agency knowledge exchange through interactive features such as webinars, e-learning modules, and professional forums, supporting continuous improvement and innovation.
- Support implementation by identifying barriers, showcasing good practice, and providing targeted resources to help local areas embed learning.
- Disseminate learning from reviews, inspections, and research in accessible formats to ensure insights are understood, shared, and applied in practice
- Influence the development and review of the new social work professional development model and post qualifying standards, particularly those related to child protection, to ensure they are underpinned by high quality, research-based evidence and reflect the realities of frontline practice. The CPA will play a strategic role in shaping these standards at key review points, ensuring that the knowledge and skills being taught are grounded in robust evidence and informed by system-wide learning.

Case Study: Improving the Response to Child Sexual Abuse in London

In response to low and inconsistent identification and response to child sexual abuse across London, the Centre of expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA Centre) partnered with three London boroughs to pilot a targeted practice improvement programme.

Over 6-months, the CSA Centre delivered their Practice Leads Programme to 60 social workers. The programme included:

- Specialist training on the identification and response to child sexual abuse.
- Reflective practice sessions to embed learning
- Tools and resources to support casework and supervision
- Ongoing support from CSA Centre experts

Outcomes

- Increased practitioner confidence and competence in identifying and responding to child sexual abuse.
- Improved multi-agency collaboration and information-sharing.
- Development of local champions to sustain and cascade learning.
- Positive feedback from participants and senior leaders on the impact of the programme.

One of the Local Authorities went on to implement the CSA Centre's Child Sexual Abuse Response Pathway, using their Practice Leads to support its rollout and applying guidance to individual casework and consultations. They, in turn, have worked with a neighbouring authority to improve practice on child sexual abuse.

This case study illustrates how targeted support, expert input, and structured reflection can lead to measurable improvements in child sexual abuse practice.

The CPA could build on this model by:

- Identifying areas facing implementation challenges
- Facilitating partnerships with expert organisations like the CSA Centre
- Supporting the development of local practice leads and peer learning networks
- Embedding learning through national platforms and workforce development

Rationale

This proposal draws inspiration from successful models such as the Education Endowment Foundation and NICE, which have helped standardise and elevate practice in education and health. By promoting evidence-based approaches and supporting their implementation, the CPA aims to ensure that all children, regardless of location, benefit from the most effective child protection practices. The learning platform will help bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, enabling system-wide improvement. As part of this, the CPA will need to have strong relationships with existing What Works Centres and Centres of Excellence such as Foundations, the What Works Centre for Children and Families, the Youth Endowment Fund and the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. The CPA will disseminate learning from these organisations and commission studies where it identifies gaps in the evidence base for effective interventions.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) How can the CPA work collaboratively with your organisation to promote learning, innovation and continuous improvement in child protection? [Free text]

Making learning accessible

Background

While there is a growing body of research and insight across the child protection system, it is not always easily accessible or consistently applied in practice. Existing evidence can be fragmented and may not always translate into improvements on the frontline. This can make it challenging for practitioners and policy makers to access the tools and knowledge they need to respond effectively to emerging risks and complex challenges. Strengthening the way evidence is generated, shared, and applied, through collaboration with expert bodies, academic institutions, and frontline practitioners, will help ensure that child protection interventions are informed by robust, relevant, and accessible research, supporting learning and continuous improvement across the system.

Proposal

- Synthesise and share findings via the CPA's digital platform, with a focus on actionable recommendations and practical tools for practitioners.
- Evaluate impact and uptake of commissioned research to support continuous improvement across the child protection system.
- Coordinate with government departments to align with existing research programmes and maximise the use of existing evidence.

By working with expert bodies, academic institutions, and frontline practitioners, the CPA will ensure that child protection interventions are informed by robust, relevant, and accessible evidence, helping to embed learning and drive continuous improvement across the system.

Case Study: Education Endowment Foundation – Supporting Teaching and Learning Through Accessible Evidence-Based Resources

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) created the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, a free online resource summarising evidence on over 30 strategies to improve pupil outcomes. Each approach is rated for impact, cost, and strength of evidence, making it easy for schools to make informed decisions. To ensure accessibility, EEF has partnered internationally with Australia, Scotland, Latin America, and Effective Basic Services Africa (eBASE) to adapt the Toolkit for different contexts. It has been translated and localised into Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, ensuring relevance for diverse educational settings. EEF also tracks usage, evaluates impact, and shares findings to refine resources and improve practice globally.

Relevance to the CPA:

The CPA could adopt a similar model by creating a centralised, evidence-based resource hub. This would make guidance easy to access and adapt locally, encourage consistent best practice, and allow engagement data to inform national learning and improvement. Like EEF, CPA could use feedback loops to refine resources and ensure they meet practitioner needs

Rationale

This proposal addresses longstanding fragmentation and inconsistency in access to high-quality tools, resources, and training across the child protection system. Practitioners, safeguarding leads, and strategic leaders often lack a central, trusted

source for evidence-based guidance and learning materials, while families and children face barriers to understanding risks and protective measures.

The digital platform supports the CPA's broader mission to promote good practice, strengthen workforce capability, and improve outcomes for children. By centralising high-quality materials and making them easily accessible, the CPA can help raise standards, improve consistency, and reduce duplication across the system. The online resource hub being developed by the Panel will give a real time opportunity to explore aspects of this proposed digital platform.

By promoting consistency, reducing duplication, and embedding learning across sectors, the platform will support practice improvement and help build a more coherent and responsive child protection system.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) How should the CPA prioritise research topics, particularly in collaboration with existing What Works Centre and research bodies? [Free Text]
- 3) How can the CPA ensure that commissioned research is accessible, relevant, and used effectively by practitioners? [Free Text]
- 4) How can we ensure that the CPA has the evidence-base embedded in the child protection system? [Free Text]
- 5) What risks or challenges do you foresee in establishing a national body to synthesise and advise on child protection learning? [Free Text]
- 6) What content, features, or formats would make a national learning platform most useful for improving child protection practice in your local context? [Free Text]

Workforce Influence

Background

The multi-agency child protection system depends on a skilled, confident, and well-supported workforce; however, training standards and professional development opportunities vary across sectors, regions, and safeguarding partners. This

fragmentation contributes to gaps between policy ambition and frontline delivery across agencies and limits the system's ability to adapt and improve.

Proposal

The CPA will strengthen workforce development by:

- Collaborating with regulators and professional bodies (e.g. Social Work England, College of Policing, NHS and Royal Colleges) to shape training standards and promote consistency across sectors.
- Advising national government on workforce development policy to ensure it reflects emerging risks and system needs.
- Providing tools and guidance to embed evidence-based practice across frontline services.
- Evaluating the impact of workforce interventions and training programmes, using feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- Amplifying and signposting training opportunities via the CPA's digital platform, making high-quality resources accessible to all practitioners.
- Supporting cross-sector learning by promoting shared standards and encouraging collaboration between safeguarding partners.

Rationale

To deliver improved outcomes for children, the multi-agency child protection system must be underpinned by a workforce that is equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and behaviours. The CPA's strategic role in shaping workforce training and standards will help close the gap between policy ambition and frontline practice.

As a national body with access to system-wide intelligence, the CPA will be well-positioned to identify emerging risks, practice weaknesses, and training needs. By coordinating efforts across sectors and promoting evidence-informed development, the CPA will support a more coherent, resilient, and responsive child protection workforce that is better prepared to protect children and embed continuous learning.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support workforce and training? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) Do you support the CPA working with regulators and professional bodies, and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners? Yes/ No/ If no, why?]

Chapter 5: Driving System Improvement in the Child Protection System

How the CPA will support multi-agency learning and recommendations

Background

Practitioners working with children work tirelessly to protect them, but despite this, systemic failure persists. These include missed opportunities to act on known risks, weak multi-agency collaboration, poor assessment and planning, and a lack of confidence in managing complex cases. Crucially, there is no national body with the authority and agility to respond swiftly, drive improvement, and ensure accountability. The system lacks a coordinated mechanism to embed learning from serious incidents and promote lasting change. Without a dedicated organisation to intervene, convene, and support where needed, poor practice can go unchallenged, and children remain exposed to avoidable harm.

Proposal

In addition to tracking and monitoring the implementation of national and local recommendations, the CPA will play a central role in driving system improvement at a local level by:

- Delivering and facilitating targeted support to safeguarding partners, multi-agency child protection practitioners, and organisations to implement action from local and national reviews, inquiries, inspections, thematic reports, and improvement plans, including LCSPRs.
- Working closely with DfE's Regional Improvement and Intervention teams and HMG funded improvement functions across multi-agency partners to deploy sector experts or commissioners to co-develop improvement plans, facilitate workshops, and offer coaching where needed.
- Supporting on developing clear action plans and timelines for safeguarding partners to report progress, with cost-benefit analysis, and tracking progress and impacts.
- Acting as a strategic and diagnostic body to troubleshoot barriers, and drive improvement, supporting multi-agency learning and implementation.
- Convening multi-agency leads where concerns are identified, promoting shared accountability and collaborative problem-solving.
- Publishing feedback transparently, such as letters to areas on the quality of LCSPRs and local action plans.

- Tailoring support based on the severity and complexity of issues, ensuring responsiveness to local needs.

Rationale

By combining strategic oversight, targeted local support, and convening powers, the CPA will help safeguarding partners and practitioners to embed sustained improvements in practice, helping to build a more resilient, responsive, and child-centred protection system. Its intelligence-led, transparent, and collaborative approach will address immediate challenges and build long-term capacity across the system.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for the CPA to support multi-agency learning and improvements? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) Do you believe your sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements? [Yes/ No/ If no why?]
- 3) What do you think are the most persistent barriers to implementing recommendations from local and national reviews effectively? [Free text]
- 4) How do you think the CPA could best monitor the implementation of recommendations from reviews? [Free Text]

How the CPA will respond to serious and consistent failings

Background

Unfortunately, persistent and serious failings in child protection practice continue to occur, even after reviews, inspections, and improvement efforts. In some cases, safeguarding partners or organisations fail to act on recommendations or embed learning, leaving children at ongoing risk. Currently, there is no national body with the authority to intervene decisively at a multiagency level when local systems are unable to improve. The CPA will have powers to hold organisations and local partnerships to account for implementing recommendations from reviews and inspections where failing have persisted.

Without a mechanism to escalate concerns, compel action, and coordinate a response across partners, the system lacks the resilience and accountability needed to prevent repeated harm and drive sustained improvement.

Proposal

When serious or consistent failings are identified, including a lack of action by safeguarding partnerships against recommendations and inspections, and previous engagement has not led to improvement, the CPA will initially:

- Hold safeguarding partners to account for the implementation of recommendations. Convene safeguarding partners and/or organisations (including commissioned providers) and direct actions and recommendations to address systemic failures in a co-ordinated way
- Compel information from safeguarding partners and other relevant bodies to assess risks and inform action.

Where persistent or significant failings remain, the CPA will:

- Advise responsible Secretaries of State to inform single or multi-agency inspection and other regulatory activity. The CPA's annual reports to parliament may include the inspection recommendations made to Secretaries of State to signal action taken.
- Share information with inspectorates and regulators to focus activity on driving improvements.
- Advise the inspectorates on Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) planning, including identifying themes based on the intelligence the CPA gathers.
- Influence and advise on commissioning decisions where poor practice is linked to contracted services.

To hold safeguarding partnerships and organisations to account for failings, the CPA will:

- Operate transparently, sharing information with the public about actions taken and exposing serious failings to drive accountability and learning. This includes transparency of safeguarding partners where there has been persistent lack of action in response to reports and inspections.

These functions will not duplicate the role of existing inspectorates or regulatory bodies and will respect and not impact their independence. The CPA will take account of the resourcing and capacity of inspectorates when advising on inspection activity. The CPA will not override immediate local safeguarding actions. Instead, it will strengthen the system by ensuring that serious concerns are addressed swiftly,

transparently, and effectively, helping to prevent future harm and build public trust in child protection.

Rationale

The CPA's ability to intervene when serious or persistent failings occur is essential to its role in protecting children and driving system improvement. Where other mechanisms have failed to secure change, the CPA must be empowered to act decisively, using a range of levers to compel action, coordinate responses, be transparent about failings and ensure accountability.

Questions

- 1) Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings (powers to compel information sharing, powers to convene partners, powers to advise inspectorates on activity)? [Yes/ No/ If no, why?]
- 2) In what circumstances should the CPA escalate its concerns to inspectorates? [Free Text]
- 3) How can the CPA ensure that its approach is both proportionate and effective? [Free Text]
- 4) Where significant failings are identified, including persistent lack of action against recommendations, what additional actions or powers should the CPA be able to take to hold organisations to account? [Free Text]

Chapter 6: System Effectiveness; structure and engagement with other bodies

CPA structure, members and expertise

The CPA will require access to a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary teams of child protection experts, analysts, and practitioners. It will work closely with, but not duplicate, existing improvement structures and centres of expertise. While the staffing model is yet to be defined, it is expected to include capacity for rapid deployment, intelligence analysis, and workforce development. We invite feedback on the types of expertise and professional backgrounds that should be represented. We are committed that the CPA will have members with relevant lived experienced working alongside practitioners to ensure the voices of victims and survivors remain central in its focus.

CPA relationship to government departments

The CPA will have a close and collaborative relationship to the areas of government with statutory child protection interests, and those that retain oversight of safeguarding partners. It could report into government through existing mechanisms such as the Keeping Children Safe Ministerial Board to ensure there is join up with interventions already underway in safeguarding arrangements, including HMG funded improvement mechanisms across safeguarding partners. This will ensure strong Ministerial oversight of the work of the CPA. It will provide advice on policy development, funding, allocations and impact of reform programmes to support multi-agency working at a national level. It will be able to hold government departments to account for recommendations the CPA makes to better protect children.

What sort of body should the CPA be?

The CPA is envisaged as a national mechanism with sufficient authority and independence to act decisively in child protection and child protection matters.

There are a number of types of public bodies with varying levels of independence to government. Some examples are:

- Executive Agency - clearly designated (and financially viable) business units within departments which are responsible for undertaking the executive functions of that department, as distinct from giving policy advice. They have

a clear focus on delivering specified outputs within a framework of accountability to Ministers.

- Expert Committee - non-statutory groups, providing independent expert advice on key issues from within the department. Like many of the NDPBs that possess an advisory function, Expert Committees comprise of specialists that form committees to advise ministers on particular policy areas.
- Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) - NDPBs have a role in the process of national government but are not part of a government department. They operate at arm's length from ministers, though a minister will be responsible to Parliament for the NDPBs.
- Non-Departmental Public Body Advisory (ANDPB) - external (non-civil service) experts who operate in a personal capacity to form boards or committees to advise ministers on particular policy areas.

Following the response to this consultation on the functions of the CPA, a decision will be made on what type of public body would be most suitable for the CPA. This will also consider how the CPA reports into the Department for Education as its sponsoring Department. This will be considerate of Cabinet Office guidance on the establishment of Public Bodies and the principles which must be met in order to create new bodies. This will also consider:

- The necessary distance from central government to be able to commission its proposed functions.
- Broader work on the governments approach to public bodies.
- The extent to which the CPA should be directly involved in drafting government policy.
- The most appropriate employment status of CPA members.
- The necessary statutory basis the CPA will need to commission its functions.
- What reporting obligations the CPA will have and how performance will be monitored.
- How the CPA will manage risks related to child protection and ensure compliance with safeguarding standards.
- Implications for procurement, HR policies, and Freedom of Information Act obligations depending on the classification.

The sponsoring Department for the CPA will be the Department for Education.

CPA's engagement with children, young people, victims and survivors

We are committed to ensuring that the voices of children, young people, victims and survivors are central to the development of the CPA. During the design phase, we

have engaged with children and young people both through the Department for Education's Children and Young People's Board and the Home Office's Victim and Survivor Panel. Their insights have helped shape our thinking, and we will continue to work with these groups to ensure their perspectives inform the CPA's priorities, structure and ways of working.

Some children and young people have highlighted the importance of being able to provide anonymous and confidential feedback where individuals can be frank about failures. They stressed the need to "keep talking to young people" and emphasised the importance of being kept informed after sharing their views. These reflections will help shape how the CPA approaches engagement, ensuring it remains open, responsive and inclusive.

While the consultation is open, we will be carrying out a series of targeted workshops and panels with children and young people, and those with lived experience to gather their views on our proposals. This will ensure interventions are not only effective but also respectful, empowering, and responsive to the needs of those most affected. We invite feedback of this approach through consultation stage.

Questions

- 1) Do you believe these are the correct criteria by which to determine what type of public body the CPA should take [Yes/ No/ If no, why]?
- 2) What types of professional expertise and backgrounds should be represented within the CPA to ensure it can respond effectively to child protection challenges? Are there any specific roles or disciplines you believe are essential? [Free Text]
- 3) How can the CPA engage children, young people, and victims/survivors? [Free Text]

Annex A: Timeline and Next Steps

This consultation is published in December 2025. It will run until March 2026.

Throughout the duration of the consultation, we will remain actively committed to fostering meaningful engagement with a wide range of voices. This includes children, young people, victims and survivors, stakeholders, and all those who choose to contribute. We will do this by creating ongoing opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, whether through regular meetings, interactive workshops, or by making use of existing forums and networks. Our aim is to ensure that everyone feels heard, valued, and able to influence the process in a way that reflects their experiences and perspectives.

We will analyse the responses to the consultation and publish a government response by summer 2026. This will include the plan to establish the CPA, and further information on its decided scope, structure, activities and responsibilities. We will need primary legislation in order to establish the CPA. The CPA functions will begin in shadow form as soon as is feasible and will then be established as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Annex B: Glossary of Terms

Child Protection

Defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes statutory interventions under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, which places a duty on local authorities to investigate and take action where harm is suspected.

Safeguarding

A broader term encompassing all activity that protects children from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It includes early help, prevention, and support services, and applies to all children - not just those at risk of significant harm. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across agencies.

Horizon Scanning

The structured process of identifying emerging risks, systemic issues, and future trends across the child protection system. It involves analysing data and insights from diverse sources (e.g. reviews, inspections, practitioner feedback, research) to anticipate threats and inform proactive responses.

What Works Centres

What Works Centres aims to improve the way government and other public sector organisations create, share and use high-quality evidence in decision-making. They support more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels.

Centre of Expertise

Also called Centre of Excellence is an organisation, team, shared facility or entity that provides leadership, best practices, research, support, or training for a focus area.

Best Practice

Practice that is supported by robust, published research and evidence. It reflects the highest standard of intervention or approach known to be effective across contexts.

Good Practice

Practice that is recognised as effective through professional consensus, lived experience, or sector knowledge, but may not yet be formally evaluated or published.

Evidence-Based Practice

Approaches and interventions that are grounded in peer-reviewed, published research. These practices have undergone rigorous evaluation and are proven to be effective.

Evidence-Informed Practice

Practice that draws on a range of evidence sources - including practitioner experience, lived experience, and sector literature - but is not solely based on published academic research.

Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)

Integrated teams comprising practitioners from different sectors (e.g. social care, health, police) working together to respond to child protection concerns. These teams aim to improve decision-making, information sharing, and outcomes for children.

Serious Incident Notification (SIN)

A statutory requirement for local authorities to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel of incidents involving death or serious harm to a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Rapid Review

A short, time-bound review conducted after a serious incident to determine whether a full LCSPR is required and to identify immediate learning.

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR)

A review conducted by local safeguarding partners following a serious incident, aimed at identifying learning and improving practice.

Systemic Risk

A risk that arises from structural or systemic weaknesses in the child protection system, such as poor multi-agency coordination, lack of accountability, or repeated failures in practice.

Duty of Candour

A proposed legal duty in the Public Authority Accountability Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, requiring public authorities and officials to act transparently and honestly, particularly in the context of safeguarding and child protection.

Mandatory Reporting

A proposed legal duty in the Crime and Policing Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, for those working with children to report known or suspected child sexual abuse, intended to improve detection and response.



Department
for Education

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