

Government Response to Phase 1 of the Southport Inquiry

July 2026

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Government of the United Kingdom

Home Office

Government Response to Phase 1 of the Southport Inquiry

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department
by Command of His Majesty

July 2026



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Foreword by the Home Secretary

On 29 July 2024, an act of unspeakable evil was perpetrated in Southport. Now, and always, we think of the three young girls who were killed – Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe, their families and all the survivors.

I remain profoundly grateful to the emergency services personnel and members of the public who responded on the day.

In the wake of the attack, my predecessor announced an independent inquiry to establish the facts and ensure any lessons were identified. Earlier this year Sir Adrian Fulford, the Chair of the Southport Inquiry, published the report of its first phase. I am grateful to Sir Adrian, his team and those who gave evidence.

The findings of the report were, rightly, unsparing. The perpetrator came into contact with the state on countless occasions in the years leading up to the attack. Failures in both systems and culture meant multiple opportunities were missed to stop this atrocity. That is unacceptable.

I am clear that the Inquiry must act as a turning point. In honour of the victims, their families and all affected, meaningful change must now follow.

In keeping with that aim, we are accepting all the recommendations for central government in the Phase 1 report. My department is taking the lead on coordinating this work, with support from the various departments that share responsibility for delivering against the recommendations. Our collective commitment to meeting the outcomes intended by Sir Adrian is absolute. We need to get this right – but I am clear about the need for urgency. The government will update on its progress ahead of Phase 2 of the Inquiry concluding next year.

We have already taken action to strengthen our response in several areas, including Prevent, online safety and knife crime. These are important steps – and they will make a difference. But we know we must go further.

That includes facing up to the reality that the perpetrator of this horrendous crime is not unique. Across this country, we face a threat from individuals who, while not driven by any clear ideology, are intent on conducting acts of extreme violence. Often, they are influenced by material and communities they encounter in dark corners of the online world.

We must do more to understand this threat and adapt our response accordingly. That is why Phase 2 of the Inquiry will examine the adequacy of arrangements for managing the risk from violence fixated individuals, how the online environment influences their behaviour, and whether we need to go even further to prevent access to knives and dangerous weapons.

While the findings of Phase 2 of the Inquiry will undoubtedly present important recommendations for government, we will not wait to make further progress. I have established a new taskforce to strengthen government's approach to non-ideological extreme violence, with a focus on early intervention, the online environment and our operational response. The taskforce's work will run alongside that of the Inquiry, so that we can move swiftly after Phase 2 reports. The King's Speech also confirmed that we will legislate to close a clear gap in the current law by criminalising the planning of a mass casualty attack.

We do all of this and more because there is no greater duty than that which we bear, as a government, to keep this country and all who live in it safe. Responsibility for what happened in Southport in the summer of 2024 rests with the perpetrator. But there is also an onus on the state to honour the victims, their families and all those affected by working relentlessly to prevent anything like this ever happening again. That is what we will do.

Introduction

1. On 29 July 2024, the perpetrator¹ carried out a knife attack at a children's dance club in Southport. He murdered three young girls, Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe, and injured eight other children and two adults. Sixteen others survived the attack but continue to live with lasting psychological injuries. The attack has also had a profound and enduring impact on the wider community in Southport.
2. Following the conviction of the perpetrator, the previous Home Secretary established the Southport Inquiry to provide a definitive account of the events leading up to the attack and the attack itself, and to identify appropriate steps to minimise the risk of a similar tragedy in future. Phase 1 of the Inquiry examined evidence from witnesses, including the bereaved families, survivors and first responders, as well as from frontline professionals and practitioners who had contact with the perpetrator in the years beforehand. It scrutinised how decisions were taken, how information was shared – or more often not shared - across local agencies, and the extent to which existing policies and guidance across government, policing and the private sector were followed or found wanting.
3. On 13 April 2026, Sir Adrian Fulford, the Chair to the Southport Inquiry published his Phase 1 Report. The report is forensic in its detail and examines the years, months and days leading up to the attack.
4. The Inquiry made 67 recommendations, of which 30 are for central government to deliver. 27 recommendations are directed at other organisations, including arms-length bodies and local organisations. Of these 27, three recommendations explicitly set out a role for central government. A further 10 recommendations have been identified for consideration in Phase 2 of the Inquiry.
5. **The government agrees with all 67 recommendations made by the Chair.**
6. **The government accepts the recommendations that are for central government to deliver.**
7. **The report is stark and unsparing.** It identifies multiple systemic failings across state services including health, social care, education, policing and youth justice agencies, as well as in digital and family environments. The Chair sets out his assessment of five fundamental failings in how the perpetrator's risk was understood and managed. Each of these is interconnected, and the failings reinforce and exacerbate each other. These are:

¹ To align with the Chair's approach in his report, this response will only refer to 'the perpetrator' rather than using his name.

- i. The failure of any organisation or multi-agency arrangement to take ownership of the risk the perpetrator posed, which the Chair highlights as his single most important conclusion;
- ii. Poor information management and sharing;
- iii. Excusing the perpetrator's behaviour on the basis of his perceived or diagnosed autism spectrum disorder (ASD);
- iv. Failure to oversee and intervene in the perpetrator's online behaviour; and
- v. The role of the perpetrator's parents.

8. The government recognises these five fundamental failings. These failings are unacceptable.

9. No single organisation or multi-agency arrangement stepped in to own and manage the risk in this case. Concerningly, the Chair stated that a lack of clarity was evident not just before the attack but persistent throughout the evidence presented in Inquiry hearings. The government recognises the “inappropriate merry-go-round of referral, assessments, case-closures and “hand-offs²” in this case. A lack of clear ownership for this type of violent risk means that no organisation was ultimately accountable for managing the risk, creating a culture of complacency. As the Chair has set out: this culture must end.

10. The Chair highlights numerous examples of failure to share and manage information between agencies. Even where agencies were engaged on the perpetrator's case, the extreme danger he presented was not recognised and agencies failed to join the dots.

11. This allowed the perpetrator's risk to increase in severity, without being fully recognised by any one agency, or any combination of agencies. This speaks to a fundamental risk built into a system that relies on numerous agencies working together, each with different information management systems, and with different expertise that shapes how they assess risk and what they deem to be important information within any given case.

12. The Chair sets out how autism was misunderstood and misused by agencies to explain or excuse concerning and violent behaviour. The Chair states that it would be wrong to make a general association between autism and increased risk of violent harm to others. However, in this individual case, aspects of the perpetrator's autism interacted with other factors that significantly increased the risk he posed to others.

13. In parallel, agencies showed a lack of curiosity about the perpetrator's online behaviour, from consumption of violent content to the purchase of weapons.

² Paragraph 18, Chapter 1: The Southport Inquiry Report, Volume 1

When put with other factors such as taking weapons into a school, this would have given a significant indication of the risk he could pose to other people.

14. Finally, the Chair highlights the troubling inaction of the perpetrator's parents in failing to notify the police when it was clear the risk posed by the perpetrator had escalated, including on the day of the attack. Agencies dealing with the family also failed to take proper account of the parents' unwillingness to co-operate.
15. Taken together, these five fundamental failings mean that the risk presented by the perpetrator to the community was not understood or managed appropriately. Despite the introduction of measures to reduce risk in the immediate aftermath of the attack, the unavoidable conclusion must be drawn that other similarly serious risks are not being managed appropriately and that immediate action must be taken across a range of partners and agencies to address this.

Recommendations and observations

16. The Home Office is acting as a single point of coordination and overseeing tracking and delivery of all the recommendations for central government, on behalf of the Home Secretary. Named government departments are responsible for delivering the recommendations on behalf of government. Devolved governments are being consulted where recommendations relate to devolved matters. A clear plan for how we will implement the recommendations for central government is set out in more detail at the start of each thematic section in the government's response.
17. The government is committed to being transparent with the public and Parliament on the progress of these recommendations. The government will publish a full written update ahead of the publication of the Phase 2 report in spring 2027. In the interim, the government will provide the Inquiry with regular updates on the delivery of recommendations.
18. There are a further 27 recommendations that require delivery by organisations that sit outside central government. The government has written to all national, regional and local organisations responsible for delivering recommendations to highlight the findings of the Inquiry. The government will continue to work closely with these organisations to facilitate and support on delivery of these recommendations, and will report, as far as possible, on delivery of these recommendations alongside progress on the recommendations for central government.
19. In keeping with the spirit of the Chair's report, the government takes seriously the need to consider the findings in the round rather than responding to recommendations individually and formulaically. Departments will work with local

partners to consider how to extend changes that are implemented locally, so that local learning can drive progress at a national level, across both Phase 1 and Phase 2.

20. The Chair has made 10 recommendations for issues to be considered further by the Inquiry in Phase 2. This response refers to these recommendations where they are relevant to or driving current work.

21. Throughout his report, the Chair made formal observations to draw attention to issues or concerns that are relevant to the issues at hand, but which did not warrant a formal recommendation. Whilst these do not require acceptance, they are referenced as relevant in this response.

Action by government

22. In the period following the attack, the government has delivered a range of changes and improvements. These include:

- Introducing legislation in the current Parliamentary session to criminalise individuals planning mass casualty attacks.
- Strengthening Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges for sharing information when pupils move settings, in particular where information relates to the risk of harm.
- Making policy and operational improvements to Prevent, including strengthening the approach to repeat referrals; introducing new assessment tools and training for Counter Terrorism Policing officers making decisions on cases; and publishing the Key Principles of Prevent, to make it clearer what Prevent is for.
- Publishing "Protecting Lives, Building Hope – a Plan to Halve Knife Crime" which sets out a resourced package of measures across government and wider society to prevent knife crime and ensure offenders are brought to justice.
- Introducing legislation in the Crime and Policing Act 2026, including two-step age verification for knife sales and the reporting of bulk sales of knives to the police.
- Publishing a public consultation on the introduction of a licensing scheme for the sale of knives.
- Publishing the Cutting Youth Crime. Changing Young Lives. Youth Justice White Paper³, setting out a comprehensive programme of reform to modernise the system, with a focus on early intervention.

³ [Cutting youth crime, changing young lives - GOV.UK](#)

- Announcing a ban on social media platforms offering services to children under the age of 16, with protections expected to come into force in spring 2027.
- Announcing the intention to implement restrictions on harmful functions such as livestreaming and stranger communication with children for under-16s, and access to AI 'romantic companion' chatbots for under 18s, coming into force in spring 2027.
- Implementing and enforcing major elements of the Online Safety Act, including child safety and illegal content duties, that together protect children from a range of harms online.
- Introducing legislation this Parliamentary session to create new offences relating to extreme violent content.

23. However, the government is clear that further action is needed to address the fundamental failings set out by the Chair.

24. The Home Secretary has been clear on the high level of ambition and has established a new taskforce that brings together policy, operational and analytical partners to drive action to establish a clearer picture of the threat, improve how risk is assessed and owned, and develop a better understanding of where specialist interventions are required across violent and high-harm threats. It will also consider training and support for frontline professionals to identify concerns and respond effectively to the threats in our community.

25. The taskforce will develop an evidence base and options for a more coherent system response to extreme violence, including by examining how agencies determine and manage ownership of risk and information, particularly at points of transition between one agency and another. The taskforce will work to address the challenging questions on accountability and culture, with a view to identifying whether further changes or improvements may be required in light of Phase 2.

26. In January 2026, the government published its response to the House of Lords Autism Act 2009 Inquiry Committee's report and committed to developing and publishing a new cross-government autism strategy.

27. The government is clear that the online environment plays a central role in enabling a wide range of serious harms including those driven by fascination with extreme violence, and that addressing this requires a cross-government response. Following the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's Growing up in the online world consultation, the Government announced in June 2026 that it will ban social media platforms from offering services to children under the age of 16, as well as restricting under 16s from accessing harmful functions, including livestreaming and stranger communications on a wider range of online services, including gaming sites. This will set a new normal for future generations, kickstart a cultural shift and drive forward the government's fight to

give every child the best start in life. The government has also announced that it will be working with tech firms to introduce device level controls on devices that will prevent children taking and viewing nude images.

28. The Chair has rightly set out the challenging nature of government intervening in matters of parenting. But it is crucial that the government and agencies take steps to minimise the impact of parental failures to intervene where their children pose a threat to public safety. As outlined in the recently published Youth Justice White Paper, the government will strengthen and expand use of parenting orders, to ensure the system is better equipped to respond proportionately where parents do not take responsibility for their role in preventing further offending by their child.

Phase 2

29. In Phase 2, the Chair will seek to make recommendations on the adequacy of existing arrangements, across all arms of the state, for identifying and managing the risk posed by violence-fixated individuals. He will explore what specific interventions are required to reduce the risk to the public. He will also review the influence of the internet and social media, and the ease with which weapons can be procured.

30. The scope of Phase 2 of the Southport Inquiry is unusual for an Inquiry, in that it is forward rather than backward looking. The government will provide full support to the Inquiry, as it hears from a variety of government, law enforcement, and external witnesses with relevant expertise. The government will listen with interest and will look forward to the findings of Phase 2.

31. However, the government is clear that we must continue, alongside the Inquiry, to strengthen understanding of the evolving threat from extreme violence and the effectiveness of different interventions.

32. In advancing this work, the government will draw on a wide range of evidence and expertise. This will include learning from academics and international partners, as well as from existing domestic expertise, particularly within the counter terrorism system, where there is experience of responding to extreme violence linked to terrorist and ideological concerns. The government will also draw on learning from local areas that are piloting new approaches, including on the most appropriate lead agencies, multi-agency structures and referral pathways. This will include lessons from pilots in the Prevent system involving individuals whose ideology is unclear, to better understand which interventions may be effective for those with a fascination with extreme violence. This work will also help inform how support can best be tailored for people with mental ill-health

or neurodiversity concerns, how services can work most effectively with families, and how online behaviour can be understood in assessing and managing risk.

33. The government will follow emerging evidence and findings from Phase 2 of the Inquiry as this progresses, to help shape the development of policy and test pilot approaches. The government will ensure that our own policy development is clearly visible to the Inquiry and will work closely with the Inquiry to share its own emerging evidence, policy considerations, and insights from frontline practitioners. This will support Phase 2 of the Inquiry and provide access to the most recent insight and expertise within government.

Responding to the Phase 1 report

34. Sections A-K respond to the findings and recommendations in the report from Phase 1.

A. Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Recommendation 4

The Department for Transport should require local authorities to ensure that all licensed taxi drivers have a clear duty promptly to report any significant criminal activity they witness while working. This duty should form part of mandatory training, and a failure to report such activity, subject to individual circumstances, should place the driver's licence at risk. Local authorities should implement practical measures to ensure that drivers have read, understood and acknowledged this requirement.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is the lead department and expects to complete implementation of this recommendation by late 2027. Progress and next steps:

- National Standards will be introduced through secondary legislation.
- Secondary legislation setting the National Standards is expected to be laid in 2027, subject to public consultation.
- Implementation is likely to include familiarisation and adoption periods.

Recommendation 5

The Department for Transport should ensure that local authorities establish effective arrangements between licensed taxi companies and schools. These should enable school safeguarding teams to access taxi booking information where relevant to a legitimate safeguarding or risk concern relating to a child who should be at school.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is the lead department and expects to complete significant elements of this recommendation by mid-2027, while the draft bill is subject to parliamentary timings. Progress and next steps:

- DfT will work with Department for Education (DfE) and the Information Commissioner's Office to develop guidance on sharing of booking data between schools and private hire vehicle operators, which we expect to publish by mid-2027.
- The draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill will be brought forward for pre-legislative scrutiny during this Parliamentary session.
- The draft Bill provides an opportunity to consider the full delivery of this recommendation through future primary legislation when parliamentary time allows.

35. The government has long acknowledged the role that taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers can play in safeguarding.

36. The Inquiry heard evidence that taxi and PHV⁴ drivers may at times be the first or only members of the public to witness indications of serious criminal activity. The events of 29 July 2024 highlighted the importance of ensuring all licensed taxi and PHV drivers clearly understand their safeguarding obligations and the expectation that they report serious criminal behaviour immediately.
37. The Department for Transport (DfT) intends to implement recommendation 4 using new powers secured in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026. These powers enable national standards to be set in England that must be met for a taxi or PHV driver or vehicle licence, or a PHV operator licence to be granted, retained and renewed. The standards will be subject to consultation, which will help the government to consider the best way to implement this recommendation
38. The Inquiry found that the Acorns School experienced difficulties in obtaining information from the taxi company as to where the perpetrator was heading. The government agrees that school safeguarding teams should have access to booking information where relevant to a legitimate safeguarding or risk concern relating to a child who should be at school as set out in recommendation 5.
39. Taxis can pick up passengers at ranks or be hailed in the street without a booking, so the recommendation is not feasible in all circumstances. It is also important to note that taxi drivers and taxi booking intermediaries are not required to retain booking information by law, therefore without a change to this licensing, authorities will have no levers to deliver this recommendation in respect of taxis.
40. Action can be taken in respect of PHV operators and DfT will work with the Department for Education (DfE) to develop advice to PHV operators via taxi and PHV licensing authorities, and to school safeguarding teams via local education authorities, to make clear the circumstances in which booking information may be requested and shared.
41. DfT will put forward a draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny during this Parliamentary session. This will enable the development of primary legislation to modernise taxi and PHV law and provides the opportunity to explore how the sharing of PHV operator booking records could be mandated in legislation. It also offers the opportunity to consider if and how this recommendation could be applied to the taxi sector in respect of pre-booked journeys.

⁴ The term 'taxi' is often used generically to refer to both taxis and PHVs, but there is an important distinction between the two. Taxis can be hired from ranks or on the street, although they can also be pre-booked, but PHVs must always be pre-booked. In the Inquiry Report the term "taxi" is used generically. Whilst the term 'taxi company' is used in the Report, it is likely that the services used by the perpetrator were PHV services. This response refers to both the taxi and PHV sectors.

42. The Chair also notes that the perpetrator's parents experienced similar difficulties when trying to get information from taxi firms about where he was heading. At the same time, he recognised that there are safeguarding concerns around whether parents should be able to access booking information, since parents who are a risk to their own children might use this information for malign purposes and it may prevent children at risk from accessing places of safety. The Chair did not recommend access for parents but observes that the balance of risks around parents being able to access information concerning the destination of taxis booked directly by their children might also warrant consideration.

B. Emergency response

Recommendation 8

NHS England should review funding and consider providing additional resources to enable all emergency response ambulance staff to participate in appropriate training awareness.

NHS England and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) are the lead organisations, working with the Emergency Resilience Unit. Progress and next steps:

- Work will be carried out to define the required training and exercising standards for emergency response ambulance staff, including frequency, scope and staff groups,
- NHS England and DHSC are assessing funding for ambulance staff training, alongside operational implications including the requirement for funded backfill.
- Given this complexity, DHSC and NHS England will provide a further detailed update to the Inquiry in due course.

43. The government wishes to echo the sentiments of the Chair in recognising the police and medical first responders on 29 July 2024, who showed immense bravery, courage and professionalism whilst responding to an unimaginable scene.

44. Many of the Chair's findings on interoperability and multi-agency working can be considered to fall within the purview of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP), which was established in 2012 to improve the way the emergency services work together when responding to major incidents. It did this by developing a framework and a set of underpinning principles for joint working, along with accompanying tools and training to support their implementation. This included the production of a doctrine setting out the principles, guidance documents, practical tools to support application, and training packages.

45. Following the Grenfell Tower fire and Manchester Arena attack inquiries, in 2021 the Home Office took on greater strategic oversight of JESIP. In 2024, the emergency services launched a three-year JESIP Transformation Programme to strengthen and better embed JESIP in responder organisations. A JESIP Transformation Fund was founded alongside this, to bolster central resource. This primarily enables the funding of a National JESIP Team made up of emergency service secondees whose role is to maintain the suite of JESIP products and tools and to deliver the JESIP Transformation Programme⁵. The

⁵ This includes updating and maintaining the JESIP doctrine and core training products; communicating and engaging with responder organisations on JESIP; supporting multi-agency testing and exercising;

work of the JESIP Team is expected to continue to reflect and address the Chair's findings on the need for further improvements to multi-agency working and interoperability.

46. The Chair makes several recommendations to learn lessons from the emergency response. Some of these are directed at police forces and some at medical responders; some are national recommendations whilst others are directed at local responders.
47. Organisational learning from exercising, incidents and debriefing sits at the heart of Protect and Prepare work. National learning from multi-agency incidents is submitted to Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online, a national multi-agency learning system that provides responder organisations with a consistent and accountable mechanism to ensure lessons identified are acted upon and make the transition from lessons identified to lessons learned. It is designed to operate alongside single-service and/or intra-organisational learning systems, such as the police, fire, and ambulance services' individual learning systems. Single-service or intra-service learning should be dealt with by those internal systems.
48. As set out at section F on Policing, recommendations for policing are for the named policing organisation to deliver, with national bodies such as the National Police Chief's Council or the College of Policing considering national implications, with input from the Home Office as required.
49. Under current plans, NHS England's functions will be absorbed by Integrated Care Boards and Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) by April 2027. Recommendations on healthcare have therefore been considered jointly by both organisations.
50. DHSC and NHS England support the issues that the recommendations for the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) are directed towards. However, while NHS England considers local review of procedures and terminology to be important and necessary, the greater opportunity is to ensure consistent national arrangements across all ambulance trusts in line with the principles of JESIP.
51. Therefore, there is opportunity to go further, in the spirit of recommendations 9 and 10, to deliver an improved national response;
 - In line with our approach to consider emergency response nationally, the response to a major incident should not be determined by one ambulance trust in isolation and should not be treated as a matter for NWAS alone, in line with JESIP doctrine such as the 'Shared Situational Awareness'

carrying out assurance activity to test how well JESIP is understood and embedded; and supporting multi-agency learning through Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) Online, a digital platform hosted by Resilience Direct and a secure system operated by the Cabinet Office.

principle of JESIP. NHS England recognises the importance of clear procedures for declaring a Major Incident or Major Incident Standby, and for ensuring that declarations are communicated quickly and consistently within ambulance services and to emergency service partners.

- While NWS should review its own systems and procedures, terminology used in major incident response must be consistent across all ambulance trusts and aligned with police, fire and wider emergency service partners, in line with the 'Communicate' principle of JESIP. The key risk is that local changes made by one trust could create further variation unless they are aligned to a national standard. The priority should be a nationally consistent approach across ambulance services and emergency service partners, so that terminology supports interoperability rather than creating local variation.
- Therefore, recommendations 9 and 10 should also sit with the Emergency Resilience Unit working with Association of Ambulance Chief Executives and ambulance trusts, and where relevant, the College of Policing, the national JESIP Team and other relevant partners to review and standardise across sectors.

52. NHS England recognises the importance of ensuring emergency response ambulance staff are appropriately trained and exercised to respond to major incidents. In line with recommendation 8, ensuring that staff have access to relevant, high-quality training and exercising remains a key part of the work being taken forward through the Emergency Resilience Unit and the wider response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations, which identified this as an issue.

53. However, training of ambulance staff is a complex issue in terms of operational and financial implications. The material issue is the impact of releasing frontline ambulance staff from core duties to attend training. Releasing staff at scale reduces available emergency response capacity and can directly affect Category 1 and Category 2 response performance unless there is funded backfill. Extraction and backfill costs are not currently built into ambulance provider funding agreements. Work will be carried out to define the required training and exercising standards for emergency response ambulance staff, including frequency, scope and staff groups, and assess the operational and financial implications of delivery, including the requirement for funded backfill. Given this complexity, DHSC and NHS England will provide a further detailed update to the Inquiry in due course.

C.Venue security

Recommendation 11

The Department for Education should update the out-of-school settings guidance by reviewing the health and safety section to ensure terminology is clear and consistent, particularly regarding emergency plans and fire/evacuation plans for smaller providers. The guidance should also be updated to include a non-binding cross-reference to school entrance security guidance, emphasising that while out-of-school settings may differ from schools in terms of what is necessary, appropriate or proportionate, providers should still consider appropriate entrance and exit security measures.

The Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by late 2026. Progress and next steps:

- DfE will review the existing safeguarding policy following the publication of a response to the Call for Evidence on Out-of-School Settings safeguarding.
- The review will include relevant guidance documents & strengthening of section on security, health and safety, and emergency planning.
- Specific consideration will be given to entrance and exit security issues, informed by responses to the Call for Evidence.

54. The Inquiry examined the security of the venue at which the attack took place, and whether, in light of this attack, changes should be made to the Department for Education's (DfE) Out-of-School Settings safeguarding guidance for providers. The Chair concluded that it would be disproportionate to recommend that all community events of this kind must take place behind a securely locked door, and that instead, the risks and protections for community events or classes should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

55. The government agrees with these findings and accepts recommendation 11, which sets out that DfE's guidance should be reviewed to ensure that its terminology is clear and consistent. DfE's guidance for out-of-school settings will reference wider protective security guidance for education settings, whilst noting that appropriate and proportionate measures may differ between education settings and the wider range of premises which may host out-of-school settings. DfE will also consider that, in future, the requirements of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, may be in place at some of these premises.

56. Between May and September 2025, DfE ran a comprehensive call for evidence on Out-of-school settings safeguarding guidance for providers, to help shape future safeguarding standards for the Out-of-School Settings sector. It is using the findings of the call for evidence, as well as the Southport Inquiry, to review

existing policy. As part of this review, DfE will further strengthen guidance regarding security, health and safety, and emergency planning.

D.Weapons and poisons

Recommendation 13

The Home Office's ongoing review of the sale of castor beans should consider regulation of the number of castor beans that can be sold in a single transaction.

The Home Office is the lead department and completed the recommended review in May 2026. Next steps are set out at paragraph 59.

Recommendation 16

The Home Office should provide clear guidance to all UK retailers of archery bows and crossbows on identifying and reporting suspicious behaviour, including underage purchasers or those who appear to be interested in criminal use of the equipment, and should consider placing retailers under defined obligations to report material suspicions.

The Home Office is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation in early 2027. Progress and next steps:

- Statutory guidance on age verification measures for the online sale and delivery of crossbows in England and Wales will be introduced under the Crime and Policing Act 2026, to be implemented in early 2027.
- Guidance will include advice to retailers on sales of archery bows and arrows and advice on reporting suspicious sales or attempted sales.
- Detailed proposals will be discussed with stakeholders during preparation of the guidance.
- Guidance will be discussed with the devolved governments in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Recommendation 18

The Home Office should take immediate action to ensure that online knife retailers are complying with the Knives Act 1997, particularly regarding the marketing of knives, machetes, swords and similar bladed articles.

The Home Office is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation in mid-2026. Progress and next steps:

- The Home Office will issue a communication on the Knives Act 1997 to trade associations, online platforms and retailers shortly to highlight the requirements and criminal offences in respect of marketing of knives.
- The National Police Chiefs' Council lead for knife crime will also issue a similar communication shortly to all police forces in England and Wales about the Knives Act 1997.
- References to the restrictions in the Knives Act 1997 will be included in refreshed guidance being prepared in relation to legislation on bladed articles

and offensive weapons, and which requires updating to take account of the new legislative provisions in the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

- The Home Office has provided £1.75 million in funding in 2026-27 for the establishment of a new National Knife Crime Centre, which will provide a national capability to tackle the unlawful sale of knives online.
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57. The perpetrator used a knife to commit the attack in Southport but was also found to have amassed other weapons including a range of knives, a sledgehammer and castor beans which he used to produce ricin.

58. The Chair has rightly stated that the acquisition of weapons and poisons is a complex topic, with a range of interested stakeholder groups that could not be consulted within the terms of Phase 1. The Chair will consider in Phase 2 how to address suspicious combinations of purchases, and further measures on crossbows and knives. The Home Office will work with the Inquiry to identify further areas of concern within current legislation.

Poisons

59. A targeted review of the sale and availability of castor beans in the UK has been completed. This work has considered the potential misuse of plant-derived toxins, including ricin, alongside existing regulatory frameworks and the need to balance legitimate use with the risk of malicious acquisition.

60. The review examined the risks associated with the availability and acquisition of castor beans, including issues relating to bulk purchasing. It also developed and assessed a range of potential policy responses to address these risks, including voluntary measures and possible regulatory approaches, informed by evidence on the availability and use of castor beans. Home Office ministers have reviewed the conclusions from the review and the options identified and agreed that further work should be taken forward to develop and test these options. The Home Office are working with relevant departments and stakeholders as this work progresses and will keep the Chair of the Inquiry apprised of developments, including any subsequent actions taken, such as consultation, including in relation to Recommendation 13.

Crossbows

61. The Chair has recommended that the Home Office provides clear guidance to all UK retailers of archery bows and crossbows on identifying and reporting suspicious behaviour and should consider placing retailers under defined obligations to report material suspicions.

62. Measures being brought in through the Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduce stricter age verification requirements relating to the online sale, delivery and hire of crossbows, or parts of a crossbow⁶. The Act introduces a two-step age and identity verification measure for the online purchase, hiring and delivery of a crossbow or part of a crossbow. The new measures will mean that, at the point of purchase, online sellers of crossbows will be required to check a photographic identity document and a current photograph of the buyer, used to demonstrate that they are the holder of the photographic identity document, so that the seller can verify that the buyer is aged 18 or over. At the point of delivery, the courier must check the photographic identification document provided to the seller by the person receiving the package to demonstrate that they are aged 18 or over and that they are the buyer. Operators of collection points will also be required to carry out the same enhanced age verification checks before handing over the crossbow or crossbow parts, to the buyer or hirer of the item. These additional steps will also prevent a crossbow, or part of a crossbow, from being delivered to a locker, left on a doorstep or delivered to a neighbour or another person in the household.

63. Statutory guidance on the operation of these measures in England and Wales will be the subject of discussions with the National Police Chiefs' Council, National Trading Standards, and other key stakeholders in the retail and delivery sectors. Although there are no statutory requirements for retailers around reporting suspicious behaviour related to the purchase of crossbows, or parts of a crossbow, we will include non-statutory commentary and best practice in this guidance to retailers for both in person and online sales of crossbows. This will include what might constitute suspicious behaviour in relation to sales, or enquiries around purchases, and how to report any concerns.

64. There are no specific legislative controls on the use and sale of archery bows and arrows. However, the government will look to include advice to retailers concerning sales of archery bows and arrows and reporting suspicions about sales or attempted sales in the planned statutory guidance. This is an issue that we will discuss in detail with stakeholders during the preparation of the guidance.

Knives

65. The Inquiry has clearly shown that there are weaknesses in the awareness and enforcement of the relevant legislation. As set out at paragraph 58, the Chair has made both recommendations for immediate action and recommendations for more detailed consideration in Phase 2 on knives.

⁶ The commencement dates have yet to be finalised but at the time of writing, government is working towards implementation at the Common Commencement Date in April 2027.

66. The Chair has also observed “a need for better clarity and accessibility regarding what the law requires in the sphere of controls on bladed items”⁷. The Home Office has noted the emphasis on maximising the visibility of existing guidance for retailers and delivery companies.
67. While the enforcement of the Knives Act 1997 is a matter for police forces and local trading standards authorities, the Home Office will be taking forward recommendation 18 by issuing a communication about the Knives Act 1997 to retail associations and online platforms and retailers. We are consulting on its content with the National Knife Crime Centre, but the communication will set out the requirements and offences in the Knives Act 1997 and the importance of complying with the legislation. It is anticipated this will be issued in summer 2026.
68. The government is also planning to include references to the restrictions in the Knives Act 1997 in our preparation of guidance in relation to measures in the Crime and Policing Act 2026. In particular it is relevant to discussion of Chapter 1 of Part II of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 concerning online advertising of weapons; and is likely to be an important part of the wider guidance applying to sections 32 to 35 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026.
69. More broadly, the government has taken action in the Crime and Policing Act 2026 to increase the maximum penalty for the unlawful marketing of knives from six months to two years imprisonment. In addition, we have built on the Online Safety Act 2023 and have legislated in the Crime and Policing Act 2026 to provide additional powers to the police to deal with knife-related illegal online content. The provisions within the Crime and Policing Act 2026 provide the police with the power to be able to issue content removal notices to remove illegal online content relating to the marketing and sale of knives and offensive weapons and requires service providers to swiftly remove the illegal content within 48 hours.
70. The Home Office has funded the new National Knife Crime Centre, with £1.75 million of funding provided in 2026-27. This is a national capability tackling the unlawful sale of knives online.
71. The Licensing for Knife Sales consultation concluded on 24 February 2026. The consultation sought views from retailers, importers and the public on proposals to introduce a licensing scheme for the sale of knives and bladed articles. The

⁷ Observation I: 1. *There is a need for better clarity and accessibility regarding what the law requires in the sphere of controls on bladed items. I wish to consider as part of Phase 2, the best way to achieve this, and options may include consolidated guidance and consolidating legislation.* 2. *In the meantime, it is important that the Home Office and police forces maximise the visibility of existing guidance and that retailers and delivery companies familiarise themselves with Available guidance includes the following: a. The Home Office’s Statutory Guidance: Offensive Weapons Act 2019.*

government response to the consultation will be published shortly and will set out how the government intends to proceed.

E. Online Harms

Recommendation 21

The Department for Education should review and strengthen its guidance to schools on monitoring and filtering systems, including ensuring that the systems used are appropriate and adequate from a technical perspective. The department should ensure schools understand these requirements and consider whether inspections by Ofsted should play a greater role in monitoring compliance.

The Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete implementation of this recommendation in mid-2027. Progress and next steps:

- DfE has proposed an update to Keeping Children Safe in Education for the academic year 2026–27 to strengthen the expectation that education settings review and check filtering systems at least annually.
- From September 2027, confirmation that schools have completed an annual check will form part of inspections.
- A consultation on a certification scheme - to provide assurance to schools on filtering and monitoring products that align with the filtering and monitoring standards that DfE published in 2023 and references in Keeping Children Safe in Education - will take place this year (2026).

Recommendation 22

Lancashire County Council should undertake a comprehensive review of how its children's services and Early Help teams (i.e. Children and Family Wellbeing Service) assess and manage risk and online harms to children. This review should ensure that all frontline staff have a consistent and up-to-date understanding of online risks, and that they have access to effective tools and guidance to identify and respond to these risks. It should specifically include consideration of the risks associated with the use of Virtual Private Networks, which can enable children to bypass the safeguards established under the Online Safety Act 2023. Department of Health and Social Care to consider whether reforms to national guidance, policy and training are required.

The Department for Education (DfE) is taking responsibility for this recommendation in place of the Department for Health and Social Care and expects to complete implementation of this recommendation by mid-2026. Progress and next steps:

- New Lead Child Protection Practitioner standards for social work are due to be published in June 2026. The standards will include content on managing the risk of online harms to children.
- On 27 March 2026, the government published advice for parents on screen use for children aged 0-5 on the Best Start in Life website, informed by an expert panel's independent report.
- The government will follow this up by producing equivalent evidence-based screen use guidance for parents of children aged 5 to 16. This will reflect both

the outcomes of the government's digital wellbeing consultation, and a separate call for evidence to be published in due course.

- The Department for Education has published strengthened 'mobile phones in schools' guidance which is now statutory and states that all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default for the entire school day, including breaks. Schools are expected to begin implementing it from September 2026.

Recommendation 23

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology should consider extending the powers under the Online Safety Act 2023 to enable Senior Coroners to make a notification to Ofcom to obtain access to social media accounts of perpetrators (not just of a child who has died), and for statutory Inquiries to be able to make a notification to Ofcom to obtain access to the social media accounts of both a child who has died and also a perpetrator.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) is the lead department, with input from other government departments. Progress and next steps:

- DSIT has initiated a review of the existing powers available to Senior Coroners and statutory Inquiries, to identify whether there are any gaps in the existing framework and whether there are any ways to expand or strengthen these powers.
- Any decision on next steps will be subject to ministerial sign-off and parliamentary process (if required).

72. Keeping people safe online requires a whole-of-government effort. The Chair's recommendations in this space reflect this whole-system approach: an overarching regulatory framework, specific criminal offences for the most serious harms, protective safeguarding measures for vulnerable individuals, and proactive measures for high-risk individuals. Together, they underline the need for coordinated action across institutions, safeguarding systems and technologies to build a more resilient system that better protects UK users, especially children, from online harm.

73. The government notes the Chair's comments about the role of social media companies, and about the importance of being able to access details of the perpetrator's social media activity in order to understand his pathway to violence.

74. Examining the role of the internet and social media in inspiring and enabling violence fixated individuals will be a core focus in Phase 2 of the Inquiry. The government welcomes this focus. Following the conclusion of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's (DSIT) Growing up in the online world consultation, the government has announced a ban on social media platforms

offering services to under-16s, as well as restricting under-16s from accessing harmful functions such as livestreaming and stranger communications on a wider range of online services, including on gaming sites. The government has announced that it will also be looking in more detail at overnight curfews and breaks in infinite scrolling for 16 and 17 year-olds, and will set out more detail in July this year.

75. Ofcom has the government's full backing to enforce the Online Safety Act. As of June 2026, the regulator has opened 38 investigations into over 100 services as duties have come into force, with early enforcement action including fines totalling nearly £5 million for failures relating to risk assessment, age assurance and information requests. Ofcom is continuing its compliance programme to assess how major platforms tackle illegal hate and terror content, including analysis of how quickly and effectively such content is addressed once identified.
76. There has also been recent progress from platforms. For example, following engagement with Ofcom, X has committed to strengthening protections for UK users, including faster review and removal of illegal content and greater transparency through regular performance reporting.
77. In parallel, the framework will continue to strengthen over the coming months. Ofcom will report in July on the use and effectiveness of age assurance, followed in October by an assessment of the incidence and severity of content harmful to children and advice on priority content. In January 2027, Ofcom will report on the role of app stores in children's exposure to harmful content, including the effectiveness of age assurance by app store providers.
78. The Home Office's taskforce on non-ideological extreme violence will build on existing understanding around how the online environment is driving susceptible young people towards extreme violence, and identify clear areas for action, including how best to support practitioners to identify young people at risk, and what is required to enable effective intervention.
79. In 2025 major elements of the Online Safety Act relating to illegal content and protection of children came into force. Together these represent significant steps in reducing the ability of children to access a range of harmful and illegal content online:
 - Since March 2025, major social media platforms and search services are required to have systems and processes to prevent illegal content appearing on their services, and to remove it quickly if it does appear.
 - Since July 2025, social media platforms and search services are also required to protect children from seeing harmful content by putting in place age-appropriate protections. This includes ensuring that children are not recommended and cannot easily access violent content.

- Enforcement of these duties is the responsibility of Ofcom as the independent regulator.
80. The government is progressing a package of measures through the forthcoming National Security Bill to address extreme violence content including proposals to criminalise the creation and dissemination of the most graphic and harmful violent material online. These measures are intended to close a recognised gap in the law, disrupt the availability and circulation of such content, and enable earlier law enforcement intervention, while remaining targeted and proportionate.
81. The Home Office is working with DSIT to ensure alignment with the regulatory regime under the Online Safety Act including consideration of whether and how the new extreme violence content offences could be considered as Priority Offences under the act. Priority Offences reflect the most serious and prevalent online illegal content and activity. Platforms must take proactive measures to counter Priority Offences.
82. To complement regulation and legislation to keep children safer online, the government is also taking steps to help parents and carers to support their children online. Together, these measures are designed to support children and their families in managing online risks in their day-to-day lives.
83. In March 2026 the government published a new cross-government Media Literacy Action Plan, A Safe, Informed Digital Nation. This sets out the steps we are taking to help people feel safer, more confident and better informed online. Alongside this, DSIT ran a pilot comms campaign, You Won't Know Until You Ask, earlier this year, which provides practical tools to help families build children's resilience to misinformation and develop critical thinking online. This is complemented by a new Kids Online Safety website, offering clear guidance on safety settings, conversation prompts, and age-appropriate advice including support for parents concerned that their child may be affected by, or be displaying, harmful online misogynistic behaviours.
84. Screen use guidance forms a core part of the government's wider response to online harms, complementing regulatory action by providing clear, practical advice to parents on supporting safe, balanced and developmentally appropriate use of digital technologies. Building on the publication of evidence-based guidance for parents and carers of 0–5-year-olds in March 2026, there is cross-government work to develop further parent-facing guidance for 5–16-year-olds to promote safe and healthy engagement with the digital world.
85. The Department for Education (DfE) published filtering and monitoring standards in 2023 and is supporting schools to meet them through the 'Plan technology for your school' service, which launched in 2025. DfE regularly reviews its guidance and updates the standards to account for new risks. Expectations around filtering

and monitoring are included in DfE's statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance.

86. The government has updated KCSIE for the year 2026-2027 to strengthen the expectation that schools and colleges review and check their filtering and monitoring systems at least annually. In addition, DfE will consult on a certification scheme for filtering and monitoring products this year to provide assurance to schools on which products align with our standards.
87. Ofsted evaluates how schools meet their safeguarding obligations as set out in the KCSIE statutory guidance, including how schools protect children from online harms whilst on school devices. On inspection, Ofsted will ask about a school's filtering and monitoring systems. Additionally, from September 2027, ensuring that schools have completed an annual check will form part of Ofsted's inspections.
88. Through the Media Literacy Action Plan, DfE has committed to strengthening media literacy education within the National Curriculum, following the independent Curriculum and Assessment Review. Updated guidance will be used in schools from September 2026, ensuring that children are equipped with the knowledge and critical thinking skills needed to navigate online environments safely.

F. Policing

Recommendation 25

Lancashire Constabulary should consider extending Operation Encompass to share automatically relevant information with schools in bordering areas. The Department for Education should consider national implementation. This is because children will not necessarily attend school in the same police force area they live.

The Home Office and the Department for Education (DfE) are working together on this recommendation. Some elements are already complete, and DfE expect to complete the remaining work by September 2026. Progress and next steps:

- In November 2025, Home Office introduced a statutory duty on policing to notify a child's educational setting when they have attended a domestic abuse incident, regardless of whether the child was present. This scheme is known as Operation Encompass.
- The accompanying statutory guidance makes it clear that notifications must be issued, regardless of whether the child resides in a local area that the attending police force does not operate in.
- The scheme is implemented across all 43 police forces in England and Wales, and Home Office is monitoring the implementation with the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection (NCVPP).
- The statutory duty applies to domestic abuse incidents only.
- In relation to other harm types, DfE has established a new information-sharing duty through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. This makes it clear that information must be shared where it is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, providing a clear legal requirement for safeguarding partners to act decisively and collaboratively. It will commence in September 2026, with a consultation on draft statutory guidance open until 14 July.

Recommendation 30

Lancashire Constabulary should strengthen its autism spectrum disorder-related training for new officers and through continuous development. National policing bodies, with input from the Department of Health and Social Care should consider whether reforms to guidance or training are required.

Whilst this work will be led by national policing bodies, the Home Office and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) are jointly providing input as required. Progress and next steps:

- Options for improving guidance and/or training for police have been provided by DHSC and Home Office to National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing.
- DHSC will support departments developing autism training by advising on aspects to consider and relevant experts.

Recommendation 31

Lancashire Constabulary should ensure response officers have access to effective technology providing clear, essential case information. The National Police Chief's Council, College of Policing and the Home Office should review whether current policing information systems, particularly the limitations on cross-force access, are suitable for modern policing needs.

The Home Office is the lead department for central government and has completed the recommended review. Progress and next steps:

- The Home Office, jointly with the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, regularly assesses the adequacy of policing IT systems, in particular how they impact frontline policing's ability to access the data they require to be effective. As a result, we have a clear understanding of the gaps and have prioritised activity to maximise the improvements we can make with the investment available.
- To improve access to cross-force data the Home Office is actively replacing legacy IT systems, such as the Police National Computer (PNC), which is 50 years old. Additionally, in the White Paper From local to national: a new model for policing, the Home Office announced that it would work with policing to develop a new National Data Integration and Exploitation Service (NDIES) to better integrate data across forces and improve access to policing data.
- The Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) is the new national data platform replacing the PNC. LEDS will provide real-time, joined-up access to national and local policing data. PNC is due to be switched off this financial year.
- LEDS completion is expected by the end of 2026/27, and NDIES will have commenced delivery by the end of 2026/27.

89. The first duty of the government is to keep citizens safe and the country secure, and the Police play a fundamental role in doing so. The Chair makes several recommendations to policing bodies, in Chapter 7 of his report and elsewhere. The police remain operationally independent of the Home Office and so it is right that the police lead activity to respond to these recommendations and observations. Where recommendations are shared with central government departments, we will deliver these in partnership and drive activity to address the Chair's concerns.

90. The Home Office has written to the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing setting out the relevant recommendations. Home Office officials will work with these organisations to report on delivery of the recommendations, and the Home Secretary will ask the National Police Chiefs' Council to regularly report back on how the key policing measures are being implemented. The Home Office will work with policing over the coming months to monitor progress on delivering these recommendations. Where

recommendations are made for a particular force, we expect policing to consider how they can apply to the rest of the country.

91. The government is aware of the issues on cross-force information sharing. It has announced an ambitious data reform programme to address this and is already actively investing in new national systems. As part of the White Paper 'From local to national: a new model for policing', the Home Office announced that it would work with policing to develop a new National Data Integration and Exploitation Service (NDIES) to better integrate data across forces and improve access to policing data.
92. The Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) is the Home Office and policing's new national data platform, replacing the legacy Police National Computer (PNC) which is due to be switched off this financial year. It provides joined up, real-time access to policing data through a modern, cloud-based system, bringing together multiple nationally important datasets to improve efficiency and support better-informed policing decisions.
93. The Chair's comments on Observation J⁸, in relation to cross-border policing and police reform are noted by the Home Office. The work of the taskforce will seek to understand the impact that future police reform may have on the management of individuals who are fixated with violence, and related harms, and what opportunities reform may offer to support a consistent national law enforcement response where appropriate.

⁸ Observation J: *The cross-border policing complexities identified in this chapter may be relevant to the government's ongoing consideration to reform of the number and organisation of police forces, albeit that issue is beyond the scope of this Inquiry.*

G. Prevent and Counter Terrorism Policing

Recommendation 32

While training for Counter Terrorism Policing, staff involved in Prevent currently cover the importance of understanding a referred individual's online activity and the practical steps required to assess it, the Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters should review and strengthen this training to ensure that officers fully understand both the importance of investigating online activity and that where online behaviour is a factor in a referral, cases should not ordinarily be closed until proportionate steps have been taken to access and assess the individual's online activity. Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters should ensure that this remains a consistent priority across all regions. Counter Terrorism Policing North West should review its own processes in this regard.

The Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) are working together to deliver this recommendation. Progress to date:

- CTP are quality assuring and reviewing existing CTP mandatory training programmes that relate to Prevent delivery to ensure they correctly reflect the importance of understanding the online activity of those referred, its relevance to Prevent, and the practical steps for assessment.
- CTP are working at pace on a number of actions related to online activity. This includes (subject to legal approvals) providing enhanced direction for online checks, policy development and linked training for Prevent Officers, with anticipated completion autumn 2026. Further updates on the progression of this work will be provided to the Inquiry as it develops.
- The Prevent Assessment Framework (PAF), captures and considers online activity to determine someone's suitability for Prevent. This assessment tool is currently under review and will include strengthened assurances for capturing and assessing the risks of a person's online activity.

Recommendation 33

Counter Terrorism Policing's capability to access and analyse data relating to a referred person's online activity should be reviewed in the context of Prevent referrals, to determine whether staff have the technical tools required to undertake this assessment. The Home Office and Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters should ensure this review is conducted.

The Home Office and CTP are working together to deliver this recommendation. Progress to date:

- The Prevent National Referral Form was updated in 2024 to include a request to provide the individual's social media handle.

- The Prevent Assessment Framework, rolled out in January 2025, requires consideration and recording of online activity throughout.
- Evaluation of the Prevent Assessment Framework is ongoing and any improvements to the tool and accompanying guidance will be considered as part of that process.
- CTP will provide the Inquiry with further updates on the expected date for completing this work.

Recommendation 36

Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters and the Home Office should assess and issue clear guidance on best practice for sharing appropriate information about closed Prevent referrals. This guidance should ensure that relevant professional agencies outside Counter Terrorism Policing, including local police and referring bodies, are notified of a closure and provided with relevant feedback, unless strong legal or other case specific risk grounds justify non-disclosure.

The Home Office and CTP are working together to deliver this recommendation. Progress to date:

- CTP are scoping the legal implications of routinely sharing information to relevant agencies about closed Prevent referrals.
- The Home Office and CTP are working closely following the Below Thresholds Pilot to determine the most effective way to notify relevant agencies about a Prevent referral that does not meet the threshold for Prevent support but may still need oversight and intervention from another agency.

Proposals include applying national minimum requirements for such making notifications, which will be incorporated in the Channel duty guidance update, due in autumn 2026.

Recommendation 38

Building on The Key Principles of Prevent published on 23 February 2026, the Home Office should ensure that accessible information and appropriate training materials should be made available to organisations which are likely to make Prevent referrals (particularly those subject to the Prevent Duty) to strengthen understanding that a fixed ideology is not required for a referral to be made or accepted. The development of a Prevent practitioner portal should be prioritised.

The Home Office is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by late 2026. Progress and next steps:

- Updates to guidance on the Key Principles of Prevent are being developed.
- The Prevent Practitioner Portal is being tested before becoming fully operational in autumn 2026 and will include relevant guidance and supporting

documents to build understanding and awareness and support organisation that are likely to make Prevent referrals.

94. The perpetrator was referred to Prevent three times (once in 2019 and twice in 2021) but Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) did not progress his case for consideration at the local Channel panel and he did not receive support from the Prevent programme. The government recognises the Chair's conclusion that the perpetrator's case should have been referred to Channel at the first referral given the behaviour detailed in the first referral. The government also accepts the Chair's finding that the perpetrator's cumulative risk picture should have been assessed by CTP when the second and third referrals were submitted.
95. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Home Office has strategic responsibility for both the policy and the overall delivery of Prevent, but it is a cross-government capability, involving a range of statutory partners under the Prevent Duty, which was established by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Home Office works closely with CTP to ensure policy can be operationally delivered, supported by statutory guidance for Prevent and Channel. CTP has operational responsibility, including for processing and assessing referrals, and for managing the CT risk for all Prevent referrals and Channel cases. CTP supports case management with operational guidance and training for Counter Terrorism Case Officers.
96. Since the introduction of the Prevent Duty in 2015, and in particular since the time of the perpetrator's referrals, improvements have been made to how risk is identified and referrals made by frontline professionals, as well as to CTP processes for triaging and assessing referrals. There has been sustained progress to strengthen guidance, training, and operational practice across Prevent, with a focus on improving consistency in decision-making, enhancing the use of data (including online activity), and ensuring that practitioners are equipped to manage increasingly complex cases.
97. The Home Office and CTP have strengthened the approach to repeat Prevent referrals. Where an individual is referred more than once, the case cannot be closed without mandatory senior Police sign-off, so that cumulative risk is considered.
98. The Home Office is piloting new interventions for those supported by Prevent – building on ideological mentoring that is available in Channel. Channel now offers practical mentoring, family support, and can provide expert psychological advice to Intervention Providers on how best to support people with mental-ill health, or who are neurodiverse. This means Channel can provide the right interventions and support to people at risk.

99. An internal strategic policy review of mental ill-health and neurodivergence in Prevent has been undertaken to strengthen how Prevent supports and manages risk where individuals with these concerns are referred to Prevent. The Department of Health and Social Care is working closely with the Home Office to deliver the recommendations from the review.
100. The Home Office is supporting CTP to make changes in relation to recommendations 32, 33 and 35 (2). These changes will improve case officers' ability to understand and assess the online activity of individuals referred to Prevent, including by developing new technical tools to assist with accessing someone's online activity and so CTP can fully understand the risk that they might pose. The Home Office updated the Prevent National Referral Form in 2024 to include a request to provide an individual's social media handle, to support this work. The Home Office also rolled out the new Prevent Assessment Framework (PAF) in January 2025. This is the tool for CTP and Channel panels to assess and case manage people referred to Prevent. Consideration and recording of online activity features throughout the framework so that online behaviours form a key element of assessments and action planning. Evaluation of the PAF is ongoing and any improvements around the online aspects of the tool and accompanying guidance will be considered as part of that process.
101. The Home Office is also supporting CTP to strengthen the approach to a Prevent subject's online presence, digital media assessment and online activity records. CTP is currently considering making a number of actions mandatory including: assessment of a subject's online presence in all Prevent cases rather than only those cases that pass the initial triage stage; assessment of a subject's digital media devices in all cases where they are already in police possession; and assessing online activity records attributable to subjects held by statutory partners in cases that reach the information gathering stage. These potential changes are currently subject to legal consideration and will require further consultation before a confirmed policy position is reached.
102. The Key Principles of Prevent have been published by the Home Office, which are designed to support decisions about referrals by clarifying that "a clear identifiable ideology is not mandatory to make or adopt a Prevent referral". The Key Principles were a recommendation from a Home Office review to understand current Prevent thresholds for referral and intervention, managing current risks and meeting future threats. The review looked at every stage of the referral journey, with recommendations looking to strengthen decision making at all stages where there is a risk of radicalisation, including in cases where there are co-existing factors, such as mental ill-health. The review was undertaken after the Southport attack and some of the recommendations closely mirror those of the Inquiry and are underway. Findings from a pilot looking at cases falling below legal thresholds for Prevent support is informing Home Office and CTP guidance on feedback to referrers and onward referral for alternative support. The internal

strategic policy review of mental ill-health and neurodivergence in Prevent also includes recommended improvements to policy and training. The findings from this review will complement work by CTP in relation to recommendation 34 to build understanding of how autism may influence risk in the context of a Prevent referral and the importance of obtaining advice from the Clinical Consultancy Service (CCS) on such risk.

103. A Prevent Practitioner Portal is under development, where guidance and training material relevant to Prevent can be found in one place. The portal will be available to Prevent practitioners such as Prevent Officers, Prevent Regional Delivery Officers and Regional Education Advisers. The Portal is currently being tested and will be operational from autumn 2026.

104. On 16 July 2025, Lord Anderson, in his role as Interim Prevent Commissioner, published Lessons for Prevent, which scrutinised the Southport attack and the murder of Sir David Amess. Lord Anderson made 10 recommendations for the Prevent system, which the government responded to in full on 2 July 2026⁹ to allow for their review in conjunction with the findings from Phase 1. Recommendations from this report, together with ongoing learning from cases involving extremely violent individuals entering the Prevent system, will be considered by the taskforce to help inform the long-term response to this threat. The government is grateful to Lord Anderson for his important report.

⁹ [Lessons for Prevent - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/lessons-for-prevent)

H. Social care

Recommendation 39

The Department for Education should update Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Children's Social Care National Framework. These documents should highlight that safeguarding and child protection assessments, when considering what support to put in place and planned multi-agency working, must consider the risks posed by children to others.

The Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by spring 2027. Progress and next steps:

- DfE is currently consulting on the 2027 update to the statutory framework for help, support and protection of children.
- The consultation seeks views on the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Children's Social Care National Framework, and policy underpinning multi-agency child protection team regulations.
- It also seeks views on best practice in responding to extreme violence and expectations for partnership working on this issue.
- The consultation findings will inform updates to Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Children's Social Care National Framework. The consultation findings will also inform wider policy development, including development of non-statutory guidance

Recommendation 45

Lancashire County Council should ensure frontline staff receive appropriate training on autism spectrum disorder, emphasising that autism does not necessarily explain or excuse behaviour. The Department for Education should ensure this approach is applied nationally.

Whilst this recommendation will be led by Lancashire County Council, the Department for Education will consider Lancashire's approach and how training could be disseminated nationally.

The Department of Health and Social Care will support departments developing autism training by advising on aspects to consider and relevant experts.

105. The government recognises the Chair's findings that the children's social care system both nationally and in Lancashire is focused on harm to the child and does not adequately consider harm to others. It also recognises that there were failings in the way the case was handled, including relevant safeguarding information not being consistently shared by or with partners, and a lack of a

single lead for the family within the local authority. While some of this was due to individual failings, it also reflected wider systemic issues.

106. Whilst many of the recommendations the Chair makes are for Lancashire County Council, the government has worked with local authorities, police forces and integrated care boards as statutory safeguarding partners, as well as other services, to make significant reforms to the children's social care system and update the statutory safeguarding and child protection statutory framework accordingly.
107. Department for Education (DfE) is consulting on the best approach to embedding consideration of the potential harm from a child to others within the statutory framework for help, support, and protection of children. The consultation outcomes will be used to inform cross-government work on the response to those who intend to inflict extreme violence. This may include strengthening of Working Together to Safeguard Children, the Children's Social Care National Framework and statutory and non-statutory guidance. Alongside this, DfE will consider changes for KCSIE 2027 guidance. In addition, the draft Information Sharing Duty statutory guidance sets out how the Information Sharing Duty could facilitate sharing of such information. The consultation is open until 14 July, ahead of final publication in September 2026.

Improving children's social care

108. The Families First Partnership (FFP) Programme is investing £2.4bn and rolling out significant reforms to children's social care in every local authority. The programme aims to transform the whole system of help, support and protection for families, with a strong emphasis on early intervention to prevent escalation into crisis. The programme provides significant investment for:
- A comprehensive Family Help offer that brings together practitioners from different disciplines to give children and families the help they need, as soon as they need it. This introduces a single front door for family help, which ensures that families who need it, are appointed a dedicated Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) from initial contact/Section 17 Child in Need (CiN) assessment. The FHLP will be able to build strong, meaningful and lasting relationships with families.
 - Implementation of new multi-agency child protection teams to lead child protection decision-making and to advise and guide the wider system on concerns about significant harm. The teams include skilled and experienced Lead Child Protection Practitioners, social workers, police representatives, registered health professionals, persons with experience of education and other practitioners in line with local needs.

109. This will mean that there is a single integrated service working with families (including those where, for example, children are neurodivergent) appropriately within consistent national guidelines.

The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

110. The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 includes several measures that will deliver a more decisive, accurate and responsive safeguarding and child protection system. Specifically, the Act:

- Creates a new duty on safeguarding partners – local authorities, police and integrated care boards - to establish multi-agency child protection teams (as noted above) in every local authority area in England. The teams will identify and respond to significant harm inside and outside the home and online and will include social workers, a police representative, registered health professional, and a person with experience of education and other practitioners in line with local needs.
- Introduces a new information sharing duty and makes provision for a single unique identifier for children. Failure to share information, particularly at an early stage, often results in poor safeguarding responses. The new duty makes it clear that information must be shared where it is relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, providing a clear legal requirement for safeguarding partners to act decisively and collaboratively. It will begin in September 2026, with a consultation on draft statutory guidance open until 14 July.¹⁰
- Places a duty on safeguarding partners to include all local education and childcare settings in their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This will give education and childcare settings a strengthened voice at both strategic and operational levels within the partnership, helping towards improvements in how information about children is shared and actioned.

Transitions into adult social care services

111. Policy responsibility for adult social care (ASC) services, including the transition into ASC, sits with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The Care Act and Care and Support Statutory Guidance provide the primary legal framework for transitions into adult social care. They place duties on local authorities to identify, assess and plan early for children, young carers and adult carers who are likely to have care and support needs after age 18, regardless of whether the young person is currently receiving children’s services.

112. We continue to work across government to identify and promote opportunities to better support people in the transition to adult services. In March 2026, DHSC

¹⁰ [Information sharing duty statutory guidance - GOV.UK](#)

launched an 11-month project with DfE, Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and Skills for Care (SfC) to develop practical materials to improve transitions into adult social care. The project will deliver a set of best practice principles for good transitions, together with bespoke training materials for social workers and social care leaders to help ensure they have the knowledge and tools to provide high-quality support to young people as they transition into adulthood. The project will include a strong emphasis on engagement with lived experience of the transition into adult social care, including young people, young carers, families, unpaid carers, relevant education settings and practitioners working in the sector. We will ensure the outputs from the project are widely publicised and disseminated.

Youth justice services

113. The government recognises the Chair’s findings that the local child and youth justice services fell short of the standard that was to be expected. More broadly, the government recognises that youth justice services play an important role in supporting children who come into contact with the criminal justice system and hold a potential fixation with violence.
114. On 21 May 2025, the Minister for Youth Justice and Chair of the Youth Justice Board wrote jointly to all youth justice services in England and Wales highlighting the rising threat presented by violence fixated individuals, and setting a clear expectation that services prioritise identifying and addressing the complex needs of these children, and ensure that referral pathways and partner relationships ensure this can happen.
115. As set out in the Youth Justice White Paper, the government is also considering its approach to referral orders to ensure that the right interventions and support are delivered to children, and how best to equip the system to support the increasingly complex background and needs of these children.
116. Referral orders were first introduced in 1999 as the main court order for a first conviction, usually for low-level offending for 10- to 17-year-olds. Referral orders require that an offender must agree a contract of rehabilitative and restorative elements to be completed within the sentence. In that context, the logic and principle of a panel of community volunteers designing a child’s intervention plan was sound – it is an important part of our criminal justice system that members of the public are involved in.
117. The government believes it is timely to look fundamentally at whether it remains appropriate for volunteers to play a formal decision-making role in the design and oversight of intervention plans for an increasingly complex cohort of children, including those who may have committed more serious offences. It will

therefore consider whether youth justice services should lead panel decision-making, with volunteers continuing to make an important contribution in an advisory capacity rather than holding formal decision-making powers.

I. Healthcare

Recommendation 50

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England should ensure that all healthcare trusts involved in the care of children and young people who are at risk of acts of violence against others have systems that ensure:

- *Key information regarding current and historic risk information is readily visible to treating clinicians in a summarised form, where appropriate with suitable warning flags.*
- *Where information comes in from other agencies that is relevant to the risk of violence to others, there are robust systems to ensure the material is uploaded to or available on their own electronic patient records. Single points of failure leading to risk-relevant communications failing to be scanned need to be designed out.*

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England are the lead organisations. Progress and next steps:

- The Single Patient Record is currently being designed and scoped.
- This is part of DHSC's 10 Year Health Plan for England, which was published on 3 July 2025.

Recommendation 52

Nationally, the Department for Health and Social Care and NHS England should review:

- *Whether there is a need for further development and guidance including on the thresholds for when complex structured risk assessments (such as the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth) are required for children and young people who present a risk of violence to others. A balance may need to be struck between sufficient provision of guidance to assist as to when the more complex type of structured risk assessment may be required and retaining the case-specific judgements by professionals that are inevitably required.*
- *Whether national guidance is required to ensure clarity about who is responsible for conducting complex structured risk assessments (where they are appropriate) for children and young people who present a risk of violence to others. Consideration should also be given to the roles of children and young people's mental health services and wider children's services in conducting or referring for appropriate risk assessments.*

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England are the lead organisations and expect to complete this recommendation by 31 March 2027. Progress and next steps:

- DHSC and NHS England will review whether further development and clearer national guidance is needed on the use of structured risk assessments for children and young people who present a risk of violence to others.
- The review will:
 - Consider the current evidence regarding the use of structured risk assessment tools for relevant children and young people.
 - Based on this evidence, decide whether further guidance is needed in the use and thresholds for structured risk assessment for these children and young people.
 - The role of children and young people’s mental health services in conducting or referring for appropriate risk assessments.
- Learning from Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust’s work under recommendation 51 will feed into the national review.

Recommendation 54

Nationally, the Department for Health and Social care and NHS England should consider whether nationwide guidance should be issued on the importance of action points from all relevant meetings involving healthcare agencies, discharge plans and management plans after risk assessments being recorded in a SMART- compliant (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) way.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England are the lead organisations and expect to complete the implementation of this recommendation by 31 March 2027. Progress and next steps:

- DHSC and NHS England support the recording of action points from healthcare meetings in a SMART-compliant manner, with clear responsibility attribution, agree to deliver the following:
 - Map the range of current training and guidance, including from professional bodies, on relevant record keeping issues.
 - Consider gaps in content based on issues raised in the Inquiry.
 - Consider how best to encourage and support the implementation of action points from healthcare meetings.

118. The Chair made a number of immediate recommendations for the healthcare sector, to both local and national organisations, and made several recommendations for further scrutiny in Phase 2. This breadth reflects the complex picture of engagement between health organisations and the perpetrator before the attack. Healthcare services operated in a system that failed to integrate risk information and respond effectively. The government notes in particular the Chair’s comments on the impact of the failure for health agencies to conduct a structured risk assessment specifically to risk of harm to others, and to share and act on information.

119. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) retains responsibility for overall national health policy direction, whilst NHS England is accountable for system oversight of healthcare provision across England and for the direct commissioning of Community Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (FCAMHS) and Liaison and Diversion teams (L&D). As set out above in Section B, under current plans, NHS England's functions will be absorbed by Integrated Care Boards and the Department by April 2027. Recommendations on healthcare have been considered jointly by both organisations.

120. Although the recommendation focuses on children and young people, the Chair has made immediate recommendations in relation to issues such as record keeping, ownership and tools for structured risk assessment, and clear allocation of actions to relevant teams and clinicians at both the local and national level. DHSC and NHS England acknowledge the importance of these recommendations made on healthcare and accept all recommendations.

Record Keeping

121. It is important to have systems in place that ensure clinicians can access relevant risk information in a summarised form. As part of its 10 Year Plan, DHSC is creating a Single Patient Record (SPR) for all people in England, so their health and care information is in one place. This will mean that for those people with legitimate reason to access it, they will be able to access appropriate information about patients, including risk information, if it is recorded in a clinical system.

122. While DHSC accepts recommendation 50, the SPR is at an early stage and currently being designed and scoped. Requirements and functionality to include risk information will need to be determined in the round as part of broader design considerations for the SPR. There are also complex legal, ethical, practical and financial considerations to be worked through when determining how best to make risk information from other agencies available to health and care professionals.

Structured assessment of risk

123. NHS England will undertake new work to review whether clearer national guidance is needed on the use of structured risk assessments for children and young people who present a risk of violence to others, focusing on children and young people's mental health services. The work will assess the evidence on structured risk assessment tools for relevant children and young people and consider whether further guidance is needed on their use, thresholds, and the role of children and young people's mental health services in conducting or referring for assessments. It will draw on learning from Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust's work (recommendation 51).

124. This work will consider key limitations. Existing tools may not have been designed and validated for all children and young people who may present a risk of violence to others. They may also fail to capture the full complexity of presentation, including neurodiversity and other contextual factors, and carry the risks of under or over estimating risk of violence (false negatives and false positives).

125. NHS England emphasise that structured tools should not be applied rigidly. Professional judgement and context remain essential, and any future guidance is likely to take a principles-based, contextual approach, rather than mandating a single structured tool, enabling assessment tailored to individual circumstances and needs.

Responsibility of agreed actions

126. Recording action points, with clear attribution of responsibility should be established practice across the NHS. However, DHSC and NHS England recognise it is not always implemented consistently. In relation to recommendation 54, the key issue is consistent application.

127. In considering whether further national guidance is needed, NHS England will assess gaps in current practice, including expectations in relation to multi-agency and complex cases, where responsibility may not always be clear, making action tracking more difficult, and training needs. Delivery will include mapping existing training and guidance (including from professional bodies), identifying gaps highlighted by the inquiry, and considering how best to support and drive consistent implementation.

128. If these reviews point to more significant reform or system changes, DHSC will consider these carefully alongside wider financial pressures on the health system, to determine what is affordable and can feasibly be delivered.

129. DHSC has limited powers to direct NHS Foundation Trusts to implement recommendations 51 and 53. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has written to Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust to encourage implementation of recommendations aimed at them. Trusts have already confirmed that work has begun in relation to recommendation 53, and that they are on track to meet the implementation deadline of 13 October 2026.

J. Education

Recommendation 57

The Home Office (for police forces nationwide), Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters (for Prevent), Department of Health and Social Care (for all healthcare providers) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (for all local authorities regarding their social care functions) should issue a nationwide reminder to all agencies considering the risk that children pose to others of the importance of respecting the insight offered by the child's school if they raise concern about the severity of risk that the child poses to others. As was the case with AR at The Acorns School, teachers will often spend more time observing the child (and their interactions with peers) than is available to other professionals. Warnings from teachers and/or schools with particular expertise (including but not limited to Pupil Referral Units) should be given particular weight.

The Home Office, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), with input from Department for Education (DfE) are the lead departments and have completed this recommendation. Progress and next steps:

- Ministers from the Home Office, MHCLG, and DHSC have written to local safeguarding partners.
- Through a measure in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, DfE are placing a duty on statutory safeguarding partners to automatically secure the participation of education and childcare settings as relevant agencies. This will ensure that their views are sufficiently included and represented at strategic and operational levels in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The aim of this measure is to strengthen the role of education and childcare in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to better protect children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Recommendation 58

The Department for Education, in finalising the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2026, and in any necessary amendments to other policy and guidance, should ensure that:

- *In cases where a child leaves a school because of permanent exclusion, there is absolute clarity concerning the relative responsibilities of the excluding school and the local authority over the transfer of i) the Common Transfer File, and ii) safeguarding information to the next school.*
- *Better guidance is given of the circumstances in which safeguarding information is to be shared in advance of i) an offer of a placement; and ii) the transfer of a pupil. This should include, in particular, where this would aid arrangements that may be necessary for the safety of other pupils or staff because there is relevant information concerning the child's risk to others.*

- *There is absolute clarity over the extent to which risk to others information is expected to be covered in an Education, Health and Care Plan. There should be consistency (which is currently lacking) about whether information on risk to others is addressed in an Education, Health and Care Plan. However, it must be made clear, that an Education, Health and Care Plan (even if one is in place) is not a substitute for the proper exchange of information between schools on the risk that a pupil may pose to others.*
- *The arrangements for the exchange of safeguarding information are not prone to a single point of failure (such as a designated safeguarding lead who is absent or unwell and does not read an incoming email). While the current guidance refers to obtaining confirmation of receipt, there is a case for strengthening the guidance with a clear mechanism at a fixed time to ensure the exchange of information has been affected. There is also a case for the introduction of a formal ‘sign-off’ by the designated safeguarding lead (with appropriate contingencies in place) to confirm that safeguarding information has been received, reviewed and acted upon prior to a pupil being offered a place and prior to the pupil moving to the school.*
- *Ensuring that appropriate safeguarding information about a pupil joining a school is shared with relevant staff (e.g. form tutors) before the pupil begins at school*
- *Ensuring that incidents of serious concern, particularly including the use of weapons and intent to seriously harm other pupils, are given appropriate prominence when safeguarding information is shared.*
- *Ensuring, where a pupil has a history of possession of a knife or other offensive weapon, that the designated safeguarding lead of the receiving school carries out a risk assessment and implements a safety plan prior to their transfer.*

The Department for Education is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by mid-2026. Progress and next steps:

- This will be implemented in the next edition of Keeping Children Safe in Education, to come into force on 1 September 2026.

Recommendation 59

The Department for Education should carry out an audit to ensure that safeguarding information is reliably being passed between schools and should consider what further role Ofsted may play to strengthen protection in this area.

Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete this recommendation by late 2027. Progress and next steps:

- DfE will undertake a sample audit of schools to assess the reliability of safeguarding information transfer.

- DfE will consider learning from the audit when updating Keeping Children Safe in Education 2027 and also how findings are relevant to Ofsted areas of inspection.

Recommendation 60

The Department for Education should ensure (either by direct guidance or through Ofsted) that all schools are required to record safeguarding information in a system that is fit for purpose.

Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and has completed this recommendation. Progress and next steps:

- We already require schools and colleges to record safeguarding information, as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Settings have autonomy to choose a system that best fits their context. Non-compliance with this guidance can be identified and picked up through a number of different mechanisms including Ofsted inspections, complaints, whistleblowing and information from local authorities and statutory partners.
- DfE is considering additional support for schools in selecting an effective and secure safeguarding recording system, this may include the development of criteria to support schools in assessing suitable systems.

Recommendation 62

The Department for Education and Home Office should review whether further guidance and/or minimum guidance is required in relation to local education authority and police visits to children not attending their place of education.

The Department for Education (DfE) and Home Office are the lead departments and expect to complete implementation of this recommendation by late 2027. Progress and next steps:

- DfE will amend guidance for supporting young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), or at risk of becoming NEET to support the development and implementation of a number of initiatives set out in the Post 16 Skills White Paper to help young people at risk of becoming NEET into education, training and work.
- The revised guidance will set an expectation on education providers to notify local authorities within a specified timescale where a young person aged 16+ is no longer participating in education or training.
- The guidance will also address referrals by local authority NEET officers to relevant services, including safeguarding. It will clarify that low attendance should trigger safeguarding consideration where appropriate.
- Decisions on whether police visits are made to the homes of children not attending their place of education are made on a case-by-case basis, informed by multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Police attendance in these circumstances is uncommon and is typically limited to situations where

there is a clear safeguarding rationale, such as identified or escalating risk of harm, or where police are best placed to respond.

- Police are statutory safeguarding partners and, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, contribute to locally agreed arrangements based on need, risk, and vulnerability. In most cases, concerns about children not receiving education sit primarily with local authorities under their existing duties to identify children missing from education. This will be supported by forthcoming measures in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, strengthening expectations around visibility and information sharing, including duties to maintain Children Not in School registers and the introduction of a single unique identifier to improve data linkage across services.
- Where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on the local authority to make enquiries. Police will support these enquiries where appropriate, particularly where there are concerns about immediate safety, potential criminal offences, or if powers of entry may be required. Police involvement in home visits is therefore typically linked to Section 47 thresholds or equivalent safeguarding risks, rather than education status alone.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) play a critical role in identifying risk, harm, and emerging concerns, including cases that may not initially meet statutory thresholds. How these cases are reviewed and escalated is fundamental to effective safeguarding arrangements, enabling police to exercise professional curiosity and ensuring systems are responsive to professional challenge.
- By mid-2027, the Home Office and the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection will review whether national guidance is required to support consistent decision-making on when police involvement, including home visits, may be appropriate.

Recommendation 63

The Department for Education should ensure that (i) its own policy guidance for teachers and schools (outside the Statutory Guidance for which the Home Office is responsible) is strengthened; and (ii) schools put in place improved Prevent training (including refresher training). This must ensure that staff are not just aware of when to make a Prevent referral but are also aware of (i) what happens once a Prevent referral is made; and (ii) the importance of ongoing dialogue, feedback and assessment between the referrer and the Prevent officer.

The Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by mid-2026. Progress and next steps:

- DfE will make substantial updates to the guidance Prevent Duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation. It will also consider whether amends are

needed on guidance around Prevent in future iterations of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- DfE will update designated safeguarding lead Prevent training by September.
- DfE will introduce a new Prevent training package for those leading or working with SEND learners.

Recommendation 64

The Department for Education should undertake a targeted review, engaging with a representative sample of local authorities, to check both that the current (improved) guidance is now sufficient and understood and that the system for monitoring school attendance is being followed in practice and meets the need in cross border cases.

The Department for Education is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by late 2026. Progress and next steps:

- Regional workshops with local authorities across England are planned for September 2026.
- These workshops will test understanding of guidance on attendance monitoring and cross-border issues.
- Understanding of this guidance will also be tested with local authority attendance officers through their representative body.

Recommendation 65

The Department for Education should consider what remedial steps can be put in place to assist in circumstances where, whether through underfunding or underperformance, local education authorities are failing to respond adequately to the need for alternative education provision for children who may pose a risk to others. Reforms currently being developed to Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision may be part of the necessary solution.

The Department for Education (DfE) is the lead department and expects to complete the implementation of this recommendation by September 2029. Progress and next steps:

- As set out in the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Reform consultation, which ran from February to May this year, DfE intends to clarify the role of alternative provision, including provision delivered outside mainstream, special and alternative provision schools.
- Last year, DfE published voluntary standards and guidance on non-school alternative provision ahead of introducing mandatory national standards in due course; these include expectations on safeguarding and oversight.
- DfE already works with local areas to secure improvement where systemic weaknesses in local authority commissioning and oversight of alternative provision are identified through Area SEND inspections. New local area SEND reform plans commissioned early this year are a key mechanism for

addressing underperformance further and will support improvement in SEND and alternative provision systems.

- New local area SEND reform plans commissioned earlier this year will support improvement in SEND and alternative provision systems.
 - DfE is investing at least £3.7 billion in high needs capital funding between 2025/26 and 2029/30.
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130. The Chair sets out the important role that schools can play in providing insight into the risk that a young person may pose to others. The government agrees with the Chair's findings that information relating to the risk that the perpetrator posed was not always reliably shared between schools, and that more should have been done to tackle the perpetrator's poor attendance.

131. The government is currently working to strengthen its oversight of, and guidance to, the education system. It has already taken steps to strengthen and clarify the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and has improved attendance guidance to clarify the actions schools and local authorities should take in similar scenarios.

School Safeguarding

132. The Department for Education (DfE) has strengthened its statutory safeguarding procedures for schools and colleges for sharing safeguarding information when pupils move settings, in particular where information relates to the risk of harm. The government has written to relevant agencies to remind them of the importance of respecting the insights of childcare settings, schools and colleges on the risk that children pose as we agree that they are often the organisation that knows these children best.

133. DfE is also strengthening the role education and childcare settings play in safeguarding through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. The Act places a legal duty on statutory safeguarding partners to secure the participation of education and childcare settings as relevant agencies. This will ensure that their views are included and represented at strategic and operational levels in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

134. In response to the report and the evidence heard at the Inquiry, DfE has amended the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory guidance for schools and colleges (KCSIE and the references to schools in the bullets below also apply to colleges). It will:

- Make clearer the duties and expectations in relation to information sharing and transferring safeguarding information from school to school. For common transfer files, we have updated the statutory Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance and Common Transfer Files guidance to

make clearer who is responsible for transferring the Common Transfer Files when a pupil permanently leaves school, including for a permanent exclusion.

- Make clearer when designated safeguarding leads should share relevant safeguarding information in advance of a pupil starting at a new school, including to help prevent the risk of harm to others.
- State that information relating to safeguarding risk must be shared and that less relevant information should either be summarised or omitted so that safeguarding information is focused.
- Set out that information on the risk an individual can pose to others should be contained in the safeguarding information that is shared between schools. The Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should not be the standard document for sharing information about risk to others.
- Strengthen advice to mitigate against a single point of failure in information sharing (such as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) being absent) and recommends discussions between DSLs of previous and new schools. This includes making clear that safeguarding information should be reviewed by an appropriately qualified member of staff so that key risks and needs are understood and that clarification should be sought if information is unclear or incomplete. It is then for the DSL to decide what information should be shared with other staff at the school as they will be best placed to know the context of the school and the relevant staff.
- Make clear that, where an incoming pupil has a history of knife possession or use, the receiving school should carry out a risk assessment, and as appropriate, put in place a safety and support plan.

Attendance

135. Attendance is vital for children to receive an excellent education. DfE has considered the recommendations relating to attendance in the report. Since 2024, DfE's statutory attendance guidance has been strengthened. For children under 16, the following changes have been introduced:

- Attendance obligations were made statutory in August 2024.
- Toolkits have been published for schools and local authorities.
- Further guidance on children missing education has been produced.
- DfE has extended the responsibilities of virtual school heads.
- The Children's Wellbeing and School Act 2026 introduces a Children Not in School register, introduces further requirements around home education, and makes the School Attendance Order process more efficient.

136. For children aged 16 and over with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), the guidance is clear on how to approach non-attendance. Whilst the

perpetrator was not NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), his low attendance meant he had the potential to become NEET. DfE has reviewed the guidance for supporting young people who are NEET or at risk.

137. To better reflect effective practice, DfE will provide an update to this guidance to include:

- A timescale within which education providers should tell their local authority when a young person aged 16+ is no longer participating in education and/or training.
- Guidance on local authority NEET officer referrals to relevant teams, such as safeguarding, when a young person becomes NEET, with low attendance triggering safeguarding action.

138. DfE has also reviewed the safeguarding guidance relating to attendance and wider needs. This has been strengthened since 2024, particularly with the introduction of the Family First Programme and updates to DfE's statutory attendance guidance, Working together to improve school attendance. The guidance underlines the obligations on schools and local authority attendance teams to consider referral to children's social care, especially where there are safeguarding concerns or absence becomes severe. It also includes pupils over 16 who remain on a school roll.

Prevent and education

139. Education settings have a vital role to play in the Prevent programme. DfE offers voluntary Prevent training for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), governors, early years providers and independent schools. The DSL training will be updated by September, and a new training package introduced for those who lead or work with SEND children to ensure a comprehensive training offer. The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation document (published on gov.uk) will undergo more substantial updates by autumn 2026, including expanded Prevent content such as referral expectations, clarifying escalation routes and signposting to DfE training offers.

Alternative Provision

140. As set out in the SEND Reform consultation, which ran from 23 February to 18 May 2026, DfE proposes clarifying the role of alternative provision (AP), including where education is delivered outside mainstream, special and AP schools to meet individual need and support engagement. DfE has published voluntary standards on the use of non-school alternative (education) provision and guidance ahead of introducing mandatory national standards, including expectations on safeguarding and oversight.

141. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have, since 2023, assessed local authority commissioning and oversight of AP through Area SEND inspections. Where inspections identify systemic weaknesses, DfE works with local areas to secure improvement. New local area SEND reform plans are a key mechanism for addressing underperformance further. These plans set out how local partnerships will strengthen their SEND and alternative provision systems.
142. Additionally, DfE is investing at least £3.7 billion in high needs capital funding between 2025/26 and 2029/30 to increase capacity and improve provision.
143. DfE will publish a response to the SEND consultation, with its plans to improve the SEND and AP system, in due course and bring forward legislation at the earliest opportunity.

K. Parents and carers

Recommendation 67

The Law Commission should be asked to review the merits of legal reform concerning whether specified categories of persons ought to be under a legal duty to warn about, or a duty to report, the criminality of another.

Ministry of Justice is the sponsoring department for the Law Commission and will work with the Law Commission, the Home Office and other relevant departments on this recommendation. Progress and next steps:

- The Law Commission is engaging with the Inquiry to discuss this recommendation to determine next steps.
 - Government is exploring the merits of this proposal with the Law Commission and will promptly work with them to discuss a proposal as soon as possible.
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144. The government is clear that parents must take responsibility for their children's behaviour and the youth justice system should do more to support this.

145. Parenting orders provide an important tool available to the court where parents do not engage effectively with youth justice services. These orders can require a child's parents or guardian to attend counselling or guidance sessions and follow any other requirements considered necessary by the court to address a child's behaviour. Non-compliance with the order is a criminal offence, punishable with a fine up to £1,000.

146. Parenting orders have fallen out of practice in recent years, and the government considers that more effective use could be made of these to help prevent youth offending, as outlined in the recently published Cutting Youth Crime. Changing Young Lives. Youth Justice White Paper.

147. The government will take action to improve how youth justice services work with families, including by strengthening and encourage wider use of these orders. This includes ensuring there are meaningful consequences, enforced by the courts, for those who refuse to engage or comply with their requirements.

148. The Ministry of Justice agrees with the Chair that it is important that youth justice services can hold young offenders to sufficient standards and boundaries in referral orders, and that interventions are focussed and appropriate. The Ministry of Justice therefore supports the Chair's recommendation 47, calling for an independent audit of the Lancashire County Council Child and Youth Justice Service, and recommendation 66 for the Youth Justice Board to issue written guidance for parents of children who have been found with a knife or offensive weapon.

149. Constructive engagement with parents or carers is a key part of the referral order process. Parents of children under the age of 16 are required to attend panel meetings and, in relation to children over 16, the court can choose to make an order requiring the parent to attend. Failure to attend without reasonable excuse may result in formal action by the court, including the possible imposition of a parenting order. Youth justice services are required to take into account any barriers to attendance, such as vulnerabilities or caring responsibilities, and provide appropriate support to enable meaningful participation. Panels may proceed without a parent only in exceptional circumstances.

150. As the Chair has indicated, there may be a case to go further than the requirements the court may impose on parents through these two existing orders, by introducing a standalone legal duty for an individual, such as a parent, to warn about or report criminality. This is a challenging issue, and one which requires full consideration. The government is exploring this recommendation with the Law Commission.

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