



Department for Education

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

15 July 2026

Dear Sir David,

I am writing today as we publish “Protecting all vulnerable babies better – a government response” which sets out the government’s full response to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s national review following the tragic death of baby Victoria Marten.

I would like to once again thank you and the Panel for the thorough and careful work undertaken in producing the national review, and the considered recommendations within it. The analysis of broader safeguarding issues, informed by Victoria’s death and a further 41 serious incidents involving babies, has provided important insight into where systems must improve to better protect babies and unborn children.

I am writing to share the government’s full response to the national review. This has been developed in collaboration with partners across health, social care, education, policing, justice and wider public services. It reflects the shared responsibility we hold for safeguarding babies and supporting families.

The response sets out how we are taking forward the Panel’s findings. It focuses on:

- Preventing babies dying by identifying and responding earlier to risk;
- Reducing babies entering care by preventing repeat removals and strengthening family support;
- Building the evidence base on effective and promising practice; and
- Facilitating consistency in national guidance on babies and pre-birth support for pregnant women in safeguarding and child protection.

As the response makes clear, significant activity is already underway. This includes legislative and system reform in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act, the Families First Partnership Programme, statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and taking forward work across government to address key risk factors such as domestic abuse, parental mental health and parental substance misuse.

The government welcomes the Panel’s recommendations and is committed to their implementation. The response sets out progress to date and where further work is



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planned, including through future updates to statutory guidance and continued system reform.

The appalling death of Preston Davey is a further reminder that we can never be complacent in our efforts to protect babies. While it would be inappropriate to anticipate the conclusions of the review process, we will consider its findings carefully and ensure that any relevant lessons inform the implementation of this response and wider safeguarding reforms.

The response also confirms the government's commitment to implementing the Panel's recommendations and sets out areas for future consideration:

- Embedding babies as a priority group across services;
- Strengthening early identification of risk and vulnerability;
- Improving continuity of support for families who face barriers to engagement with services; and
- Exploring how support for parents can be strengthened to help prevent repeat removals.

The death of Victoria was a tragedy. It is imperative that the learning from the Panel's national review leads to meaningful and lasting change. We are committed to working across government and with partners to deliver the actions set out in this response and to improve outcomes for babies and their families.

Thank you again for the Panel's work in this important area. I look forward to working with you as we take this forward.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson".

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education