



Department
for Education

Serious Incident Notification

Guide for local authorities – version 1.0

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Summary

This publication gives guidance for local authorities submitting serious incident notifications using the child safeguarding incident notification system.

It includes information on:

- when to submit a notification
- what information is required
- definitions of terms used throughout the notification form

Who this publication is for

This guidance is for:

- local authorities

Main points

Changes to the online notification form have been made. Below is the list of changes.

Changes from July 2026

As set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 370 of Working Together 2026 ([Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)) that three safeguarding partners have equal responsibility in determining whether an incident meets the criteria for notification and for contributing relevant information. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) should have final oversight of the quality and accuracy of the notification that is submitted. To reflect these requirements, two new questions have been added to record these processes.

The free-text 'incident outline' and 'actions taken' questions have been split into separate text boxes and further information is required relating to any regulatory actions taken or criminal investigations.

The "semi-independent unit" option has been replaced with "supported accommodation" to reflect the introduction of the Ofsted registration and inspection regime for supported accommodation providers and the terminology adopted in national guidance and regulations ([Providing supported accommodation for children and young people - GOV.UK](#))

As set out in Chapter 5, Paragraph 372 of Working Together 2026, where an incident relates to serious harm or death of a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected, a notification must be submitted within five working days of safeguarding partners becoming aware of the incident. A new question has been added to record the reason for any delay, where applicable.

Known issues with this service

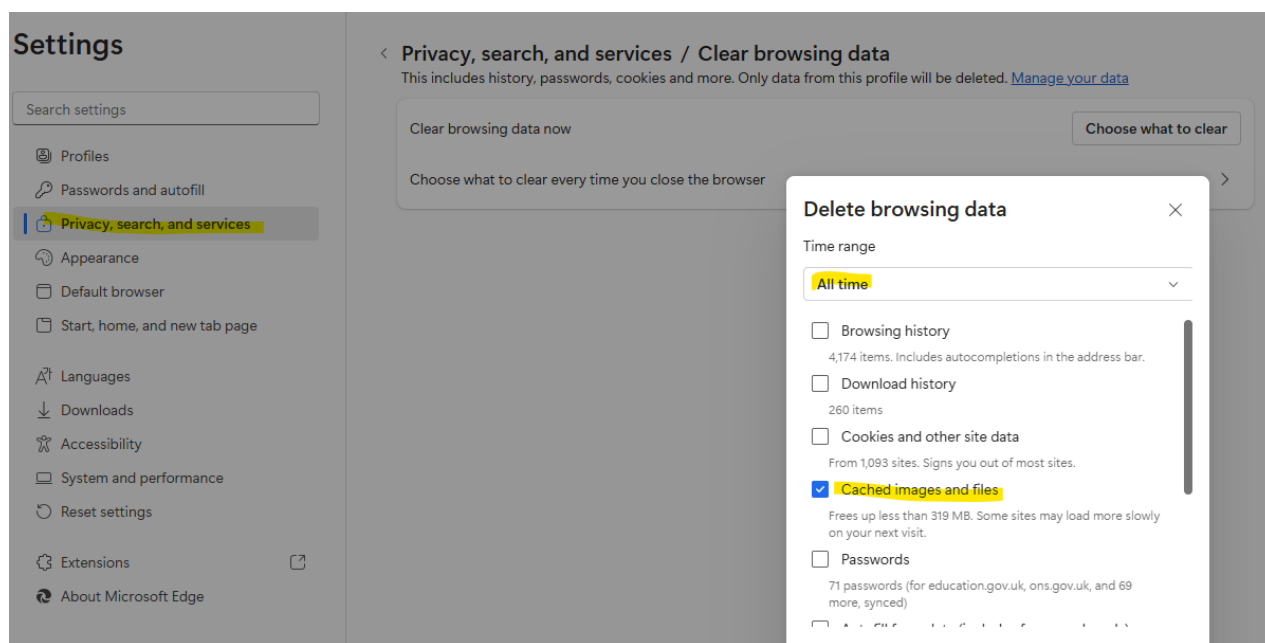
If you are experiencing technical difficulties with the child safeguarding incident notification system, please begin by clearing your browser cached history.

To clear your browser's cached history (see image below for reference):

1. Select 'Settings' in your web browser
2. Select 'Privacy, search, and services'
3. Scroll to "Clear browsing data" section, select 'Choose what to clear', ensure 'All time' is selected in the "Time range" option and only 'Cached images and files' is selected, select 'Clear now'

If you are still experiencing technical difficulties with the online form, please send a screenshot of the error message and time the error message appeared to

mailbox.CPOD@education.gov.uk



Overview of the Serious Incident Notification data collection

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel), Department for Education (DfE) and Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) have joint access to the information submitted to the Child safeguarding incident notification system, where notifications are notified under the [scope section](#). The Panel has access to the information submitted to the child safeguarding incident notification system in respect of notifications of children who have died or been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Legal duties under the Data Protection Act

Data processing

It is important that you process all data (not just that collected for the purposes of the Serious Incident Notification process) in accordance with the full requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). Further information can be found in the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) overview of the [UK GDPR](#).

Privacy notices

Being transparent and providing accessible information to individuals about how you will process their personal data is a key element of UK GDPR and the DPA 2018. The most common way to provide such information is through a privacy notice. Please refer to the ICO website and DfE explanation of privacy notices for further information.

The DfE privacy notice for collecting data on serious incident notifications, is available in the [Privacy information: children, young people and care leavers aged up to 25 - GOV.UK](#).

Scope

Children who have died or been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected

Section 16C of the Children Act 2004 states that where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the Panel if:

(a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or

(b) while normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.

A child is anyone under the age of 18 and can include unborn children.

Local authorities and safeguarding partners should refer to Working Together ([Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)) and the Panel's guidance for further clarity on issues relating to the criteria for serious child safeguarding cases ([Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - GOV.UK](#)).

Looked after children who have died

Schedule 2, Part II, para 20 of the Children Act 1989 states that the local authority must also notify the Secretary of State for Education and Ofsted, where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Under section 22 of the Children Act 1989, a child is legally defined as 'looked after' by a local authority if he or she:

- gets accommodation from the local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order (to put the child into the care of the local authority)
- is subject to a placement order (to put the child up for adoption)

Care leavers who have died

As set out in chapter 5, paragraph 382 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 states that the local authority should notify the Secretary of State for Education and Ofsted of the death of a care leaver up to and including the age of 24.

A care leaver is a person who is no longer looked after.

A child is a care leaver if they are aged 16 or 17 and fall into one of the following:

- is no longer looked-after
- has been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16.

Benefits of serious incident notification data collection

Data collected at a national level is of value to local safeguarding partnerships and others as part of a wider system of improvement and accountability. Collecting and holding information centrally, as with the serious incident notification data, enables valuable local comparisons to be made that would otherwise be very difficult without the structure of a centrally defined data collection.

A fully completed dataset allows local safeguarding partners to better understand variations in serious incidents reported.

Submission and time limits

As set out in chapter 5, paragraph 372 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, where an incident relates to serious harm or death of a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected, states a notification must be submitted within five working days of safeguarding partners becoming aware of the incident. The notification should be submitted via the [Child safeguarding incident notification system](#).

Local authorities submitting notifications to the Child safeguarding incident notification system must be aware that the notification form times out after 20 minutes of inactivity.

Data collection guidance

This section provides guidance on each question for the online data collection form, in the order in which the questions appear. For a summary of each question, see [Appendix B – Summary of Data collection questions](#).

If the incident relates to more than one child

This notification system is incident based. Only one notification should be submitted for each incident, regardless of the number of children involved.

Details should be provided for the primary child only. This will usually be the child who has suffered the greatest harm or the child who is best known to the agencies involved.

In most cases, the child who has died or been seriously harmed should be recorded as the subject of the notification. However, in exceptional circumstances, it may be more appropriate to record a child perpetrator as the subject of the notification. For example, this may be appropriate where that child has had significantly greater involvement with agencies and recording them as the subject would better support understanding of the multi-agency context and any learning arising from the incident.

Details of any other children involved in the incident should be recorded in the [Enter a brief overview of the incident that took place](#) section or the [Who was present at the time of the incident](#) section.

Your details

Provide the name, email address and role of the person completing the online data collection form.

Reason for notification

All incidents meeting the criteria set out in the [scope](#) should be notified as either a child or care leaver, based on the individual's age at the time of the incident. If the individual is now over 18 but the incident occurred when they were a child, the incident should be notified as relating to a child.

Record whether the primary child is a looked after child at the time of the incident, or a care leaver (a previously looked after child).

See [scope](#) for the definition of a looked after child.

A child is a care leaver if they are aged 16 or 17 and fall into one of the following:

- is no longer looked-after

- has been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16.

Where the incident relates to a child who has been seriously harmed or died and abuse or neglect is known or suspected, it should be notified as either “serious harm” or “death”, unless there is a clear reason to notify as “other”.

All child deaths should be notified as ‘death’. This includes deaths by suicide or incidents involving concealed pregnancies resulting in the death of an unborn child.

See the Panel’s guidance on considerations for notifying of child suicides: [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel - GOV.UK](#).

Where the notification relates to the death of a looked after child, there will be an option to record 'no abuse or neglect', where this is appropriate and consistent with the [scope](#).

Safeguarding partners agreement

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been seriously harmed or has died, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

As set out in chapter 5, paragraph 370 in Working together to safeguard children 2026, all three safeguarding partners have equal responsibility in determining whether an incident meets the criteria for notification and for contributing relevant information. A question has been added at the beginning of the form to record this process.

Director of children’s service oversight

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been seriously harmed or has died, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

As set out in chapter 5, paragraph 370 in Working together to safeguard children 2026, the Director of children’s services (DCS) should have final oversight of the quality and accuracy of the notification submitted. A declaration question has been added at the beginning of the form to confirm this requirement has been met. The local authority cannot proceed with the notification if this declaration cannot be made.

This guidance should be used to gather the required information, which should be agreed with the DCS before the notification is submitted.

About the incident

If the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17, record the local authority in whose area the incident took place and the responsible local authority. The responsible local authority is the authority that looks after the child or, where the child is not looked after, the authority in whose area the child normally lives.

The incident date should be the date on which the serious harm or death of the child or care leaver occurred. This should not be the date on which the local authority became aware of the incident. Where harm was inflicted on a child and the child subsequently died, the date of the harm and the date of death may be different and do not need to be the same. Where an incident spans a period of time, the date recorded should be the date of the event that triggered the notification. If the notification relates to a child, the child must be aged 0 to 17 on the date of the incident.

The collection of date of death information supports the Child Death Review Process under section 16M of the Children Act 2004, which places a statutory requirement on partners to review child deaths.

Characteristics of the incident

For the list of characteristics of the incident and their definitions, see [Appendix A – Characteristics of the incident definitions](#).

Explain why there was a delay in this notification

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been seriously harmed or has died, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

As set out in chapter 5, paragraph 372 Working together to safeguard children 2026, notifications should be submitted within 5 working days of the safeguarding partners becoming aware of the incident. If the notification was submitted after this timeframe, provide the reason for the delay.

Within 200 characters, provide a clear explanation for the delay. This may include operational, safeguarding, or information-gathering factors that prevented the notification from being submitted within 5 working days.

If the incident relates to:

- the death of a looked after child where there was no known or suspected abuse or neglect; or
- the death of a care leaver,

enter 'Not applicable'.

Enter a brief overview of the incident that took place

Within 2,000 characters, provide a concise summary of the incident. Information should be limited to what is necessary to understand the nature and circumstances of the incident. Detailed medical information, extensive descriptions of injuries, and other unnecessary personal information should not be included.

Information provided must be relevant, necessary and proportionate, in accordance with data protection principles.

Provide details of:

- a summary of what happened to make clear the nature of the incident.
- where multiple children were involved, the number of children involved.

Summarise any background information that helps explain the context of this incident

Within 4,000 characters, provide details of:

- relevant context that helps explain how the incident arose or events leading up to the incident.
- previous concerns, family or placement circumstances, recent changes or events, or known risks or vulnerabilities, where relevant.
- only information that is directly relevant to understanding the incident.

Do not include a full history of involvement with agencies, as this information is requested later in the form.

How does the incident meet the criteria for this notification

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

Within 200 characters, briefly explain how the incident meets the notification criteria set out in chapter 5, paragraph 362 or 381 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Where the incident happened

Within 200 characters, provide a brief detail of where the incident took place, for example, a family home, school, public place, NHS setting, or the child or care leaver's placement.

The following question asks whether the incident took place in a provider setting or organisation. This refers to a formal setting or organisation responsible for providing services or care to children or care leavers, for example a school, college, nursery, foster care placement, children's home, health provider, or youth justice setting.

If the incident did not take place in a provider setting or organisation, this would typically refer to incidents occurring in a private or non-institutional context, for example a home, public place or another setting without organisational oversight.

If the incident took place in a provider setting or organisation, provide the name and address of the setting.

Who was present at the time of the incident

Within 200 characters, provide a brief description of who was present at the time of the incident, for example, other children or young people involved, carers, family members, or other relevant individuals. Provide the roles of those present rather than personal details, such as names.

What immediate actions that have been taken to safeguard children

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been harmed.

Within 2,000 characters, provide brief details of the immediate actions taken to safeguard children following the incident. Include actions taken to ensure the safety and welfare of the child or children involved, including any children directly affected, siblings, other children in the household, and children in the wider community.

Actions may include medical treatment, removal from a setting, increased supervision, strategy discussions, or referrals to other agencies.

If the incident relates to the death of a looked after child where there was no suspected abuse or neglect, enter 'Not applicable'.

Are there any ongoing concerns about the immediate safety of the children involved

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been harmed.

If there are ongoing concerns about the immediate safety of any children, within 200 characters provide brief details of:

- whether there are any current or continuing risks.
- the nature of those concerns and the action being taken to manage them.

If the incident relates to the death of a looked after child where there was no suspected abuse or neglect, enter 'Not applicable'.

Is there a live criminal or police investigation

If there is a live criminal or police investigation, within 200 characters provide brief details of the nature of the investigation. Do not include sensitive operational information that could compromise the investigation or any related proceedings.

Have any regulators taken immediate action

If any regulatory body has taken immediate action, within 200 characters provide brief details. For example, this may include Ofsted. Include details of any inspections, restrictions, or enforcement action taken.

Have any other agencies or boards been notified of this incident

If other agencies or boards have been notified of the incident, within 200 characters provide brief details of the organisations informed. Examples may include education providers, child death review partners, or youth justice services.

Child or care leaver details

Name

Record the primary child name or care leaver name.

Date of birth

If the exact date of birth is not known, record an approximate date of birth based on the primary child's estimated age at date of incident.

For unborn children, please record date of birth not known and make clear in the 'Enter a brief overview of the incident that took place' section that the notification relates to an unborn child.

Sex

This should be the primary child or care leaver's sex, as recorded on a birth certificate or Gender Recognition Certificate. This is the value that identifies a person's sex as recognised in law. If the child is unborn, record the sex as 'Not known'.

Gender

If the primary child or care leaver identify differently from their registered sex at birth, then 'No' should be recorded.

If the child is unborn, 'Not known' gender should be recorded.

Ethnic group

Ethnic groups are specified using the ONS 2021 census categories.

For unborn children, record the ethnic group as 'Not known'.

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Certain medical conditions, including HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer, are considered disabilities regardless of their effect on day-to-day activities. The Equality Act 2010 provides further information on matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long-term means that the impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months.

A child or care leaver does not need to be receiving support or services in relation to their disability, provided they meet the definition above. Record all known relevant disabilities affecting the child or care leaver, regardless of whether a formal diagnosis has been made.

A child or care leaver may have multiple disabilities. Where this applies, more than one category from the list below can be selected. The 'Other' category may also be selected alongside any of the other categories.

Disability options	Description
No disability	No disability

Disability options	Description
Physical disabilities	e.g. getting about the house and beyond, holding and touching, seizures.
Sensory disabilities	e.g. hearing, vision
Learning or understanding disabilities	e.g. speaking and/or understanding others, having special educational needs.
Social and behavioural difficulties	e.g. a condition entailing behavioural difficulties, includes attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
Other mental health conditions	e.g. anxiety, depression
Other	If one or more of the child's disabilities under the Equality Act 2010 does not fall into any of the above categories.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking child

An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) is a person aged under 18 who is applying for asylum in their own right, is separated from both parents, and is not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, has responsibility for doing so.

Record whether the care leaver was previously an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

Legal status

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

Record the legal status of the child at the time of the incident. This should reflect the child's legal status when the incident occurred, not any changes made subsequently.

Legal status options	Description
None	No legal status
Adoption	A child that was a permanent and legal member of their new family at the time of the incident. This doesn't include children that were in the adoption process at the time of the incident.

Legal status options	Description
Care order	A child that was placed in the care of a local authority under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Emergency protection order	A child that was subject to an emergency protection order under Section 44 and 45 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Interim care order	A child that was subject to an interim care order under Section 38 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Placement order	A child that was placed for adoption with prospective adopters under Section 21, Adoption and Children Act 2002, at the time of the incident.
Police protection	A child that was taken into protection by the police under Section 46 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Section 20 accommodation	A child that was accommodated by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Special guardianship order	A child that had a permanent legal home with a special guardian under Section 14A of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident.
Supervision order	A child that was supervised by a local authority under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989, at the time of the incident. A child is not a looked-after child under this order.
Ward of court	A child that was a ward of the court at the time of the incident where the High Court can be appointed as a child's supreme legal guardian.
Other	Any other legal status

Children's social care details

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

Record whether the child was known to Children's Social Care before the incident.

A child known to Children's Social Care may be receiving, or may previously have received, services or support. This may include early help, child in need assessments or plans, child protection enquiries or plans, and other support provided before or at the time of the incident.

This may also include:

- children who have previously been referred to Children's Social Care
- children who have been referred for support but are not currently receiving services
- children in a household where a sibling is currently receiving support from Children's Social Care

Further information can be provided in the free-text box on this page.

If the child was known to Children's Social Care, provide the following information:

- whether the child was receiving services or support from Children's Social Care at the time of the incident.
- where applicable, details of any child in need plan (under section 17 of the Children Act 1989), including the start date if the plan was active at the time of the incident, or the length of time since the plan ended if it had previously ended.
- where applicable, details of any child protection plan, including the category of abuse, the start date if the plan was active at the time of the incident, or the length of time since the plan ended if it had previously ended
- any other relevant information about Children's Social Care involvement (maximum 4,000 characters), including details of early help, referrals, previous child in need or child protection plans, or where siblings are known to services.

Child in need plans may begin before a child is born. Where this applies, record the start date of the plan, even if this was before the child's birth.

Where Children's Social Care involvement has ended, provide details of why services or support ceased.

Child in need plans and child protection plans do not include other types of plan, such as leaving care support plans or adoption support plans.

Other agency details

If the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17, record whether the child was known to other agencies at the time of, or before, the incident.

A child is currently known to agencies if they were receiving support or services at the time of the incident. A child was previously known to agencies if they had received support or services that had ended before the incident occurred.

If the notification relates to a care leaver aged 18 to 24, record whether the care leaver was known to social care or other agencies before the incident. Where known, include the last date the care leaver was in touch with social care.

Other agencies	Examples
Police	Children or care leavers who are known to the police, probation services, or youth justice services, including those who have committed an offence or been victims of crime; children whose parent(s) or primary carer are known to the police in relation to criminal offences or where the police have attended incidents such as domestic abuse; and children who are known to UK Border Force, immigration services, or counter-terrorism services.
Health	Children or care leavers who are known to general practice services, health visitors, midwives, school nurses, maternity services, children and young people's mental health services, adult mental health services, sexual health services, alcohol and drug services (for the child or parent/carer), hospital inpatient or outpatient services, private healthcare, or therapy services. This includes children or care leavers who have been referred to a service or are on a waiting list, even if they have not yet attended an appointment.
Other	Children or care leavers who are known to voluntary organisations or charities, housing and homelessness support services and Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass).

Where was the child living

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

Record where the child was living at the time of the incident. For the placement address, provide the city and postcode only.

Child living options	Description
Foster care – short term	Short-term foster care placements are those where the child is looked after for a few weeks or months while plans were being made for their future. This doesn't include children that live in kinship foster care (also known as family and friends foster care).
Foster care – long term	Long-term foster care placements are those where the child is placed with foster families for an extended period, often until they reach adulthood. This doesn't include children that live in kinship foster care (also known as family and friends foster care).
Home	Living at home includes children that reside with their parent(s) or adopted parents including while on a care order. This does not include children living in foster care or kinship arrangements.
Hospital	Children who live in an institution that provide medical or surgical treatment.
Kinship care	Kinship care is an arrangement where a child lives with and is cared for by a relative, friend or other connected person for the majority of the time, rather than with their parent(s). The arrangement may be temporary or longer term. An informal kinship care arrangement is where a family has made a decision privately about where a child should live without the Local Authority having a major role and where a Family Court has not made an order in respect to the care of the child. A formal kinship care arrangement is where the carer has been granted a legal order by the Family Court for the care of the child (e.g. a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order), or where they have become kinship foster carers.
Mother and baby unit	Children who live in a hospital ward that provide mental health treatment for mothers while keeping them with their babies.
Residential children's home	A residential children's home is a type of care given to children who cannot stay in their birth family home, provided by paid, qualified residential staff. These can include open and secure children's homes.
Residential family centre	A residential family centre provides accommodation for vulnerable families (both children and parents), where capacity to parent safely is assessed and guidance or counselling is given.
Residential school	A residential school is where students live and study during the school year.
Supported accommodation	Supported accommodation is a place that provide accommodation and support for young people who transition

Child living options	Description
	from care to independent living. From 2024 all placements are supported accommodation (registered with Ofsted).
Unregistered accommodation	Unregistered accommodation is accommodation being run by a provider who has not registered with Ofsted or CQC (where this is appropriate). It is illegal to run, carry on, or manage a setting or agency that is not registered.
Young offenders institute	A young offenders institute is a place that provides accommodation for young offenders. These offenders will have received a custodial sentence following criminal offence convictions or may be being held on remand awaiting trial on pending charges.
Other	Any other living option.
Not known	If it is not known where the child was living at the time of the incident.

Education or early years details

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

Record the education or early years setting attended by the child at the time of the incident. For the setting address, provide the city and postcode only. If the child attended more than one education or early years setting, record the setting where the child spent most of their time.

Record whether the child had an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. An EHC plan sets out the education, health and social care support to be provided to a child or young person with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Education or early years options	Description
Alternative provision	An alternative provision of education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.
Child missing education	Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education.
Childminder	A person who receives payment for working in their own home, looking after at least one child for more than two hours a day.
College	An educational institution that provides further and higher education.
Electively home educated	A choice by parent(s)/primary care giver to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire,

Education or early years options	Description
	instead of sending them to school full-time.
No education or early years provision	Children not of compulsory school age who are not receiving education or early years provision at the time of the incident. This can include children under school or early years age.
Nursery	Any place where young children and babies are taken care of by professionals.
School	Any educational institution that provides primary, secondary, or both types of education. This does not include alternative provision.
Other	Any other education or early years placement.
Not known	It is not known if the child was receiving education or early years provision at the time of the incident.

Appendix A – Characteristics of the incident definitions

Record all applicable incident characteristics that were known or suspected at the time the notification was submitted.

Characteristic	Description
Alcohol misuse	Alcohol misuse by child - concerns that a child or young person is misusing alcohol, including harmful use or alcohol dependence. Alcohol misuse by person - concerns that another person, such as a friend, family member, or partner, is misusing alcohol, including harmful use or alcohol dependence. Alcohol misuse by parent - concerns that a parent or primary caregiver is misusing alcohol, including harmful use or alcohol dependence.
Child criminal exploitation	As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity: a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants or; b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator or; c) through violence or the threat of violence. A child may have been criminally exploited even where the activity appears to be consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may also take place through the use of technology.
Child is carer	A child who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person of any age. This does not usually include care provided as paid work, under a contract, or as voluntary work.
Child missing	This includes children who have run away from home or a care placement, children who have been reported missing to the police, or children who are absent from their home, care placement, school, or another place where they are expected to be, and whose whereabouts are not known (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014).

Characteristic	Description
Child perpetrator	A child who has committed a crime or a violent or harmful act.
Child sexual exploitation	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Characteristic	Description
Domestic abuse	This includes situations where the child sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to either the person carrying out the abusive behaviour or the person towards whom the abusive behaviour is directed. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse may consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour and can include: • physical or sexual abuse • violent or threatening behaviour • controlling or coercive behaviour • economic abuse • psychological, emotional, or other abuse Under the statutory definition, both the person carrying out the behaviour and the person towards whom the behaviour is directed must be aged 16 or over and be personally connected (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). This includes current or former partners and family members. Children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse within their home or family environment, including where the person carrying out the abuse does not live with the child. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children aged under 18 as victims in their own right where they see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse. Young people may also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as teenage relationship abuse.
Drug misuse	Drug misuse by child - concerns about drug misuse by the child or young person. This includes the use of a substance in a way that is not consistent with legal, clinical, or medical guidance. Drug misuse by person - concerns about drug misuse by another person, for example a friend, family member, or partner. This includes the use of a substance in a way that is not consistent with legal, clinical, or medical guidance. Drug misuse by parent - concerns about drug misuse by a

Characteristic	Description
	parent or primary caregiver. This includes the use of a substance in a way that is not consistent with legal, clinical, or medical guidance.
Elective home education	A choice by parent or primary care giver to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.
Emotional abuse	The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Extremism	Extremism is defined in the Prevent strategy as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces.
Fabricated or induced illness	Fabricated or induced illness happens when a parent or primary care giver exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.
Faith linked abuse	Abuse linked to faith or belief is where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified, and could be caused by, a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features; or when practices linked to faith or belief are harmful to a child.
Female genital mutilation	Female genital mutilation is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there is no medical reason for this to be done (NHS).
Filicide	The act of a parent killing their child.

Characteristic	Description
Gangs	The word 'gang' can mean different things in different contexts. The NSPCC distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs: • Peer group - a relatively small and often temporary social group, which may or may not describe itself as a gang depending on the context. • Street gang - a group of young people who see themselves, and are seen by others, as a distinct group for whom crime and violence are a central part of the group's identity. • Organised criminal gangs - a group of individuals who are involved in criminal activity for personal gain, whether financial or otherwise. For many members, criminal activity is their primary occupation.
Knife crime	Knife crime relates to crimes involving knives or other bladed or pointed articles.
Life-limiting/serious illness	Life-limiting illness are those that cannot be cured and lead to a child's or young persons death. Serious illness are those that carry a high risk of death.
Mental health	Mental health child - concerns that a child or young person may have mental health needs, whether suspected or diagnosed. Mental health person - concerns that another person, such as a friend, family member, or partner, may have mental health needs, whether suspected or diagnosed. Mental health parent - concerns that a parent or primary caregiver may have mental health needs, whether suspected or diagnosed.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent(s)/primary care giver failing to: • provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) • protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger • ensure adequate supervision (including the use of

Characteristic	Description
	inadequate caregivers) • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment • provide suitable education It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
Online abuse	Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web.
Overlay	Overlay is a type of accidental death that occurs when a larger person rolls on to and smothers an infant when sleeping.
Parent is a care leaver	One or both of the child's parent or primary care giver is a care leaver aged under 25. A care leaver is a person who has been in Local Authority care (e.g. residential or foster care) for a period of at least 13 weeks or more, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks or more, since they were age 14, and ending after age 16.
Parent is in care	One or both of the child's parent or primary care giver is in the care of the local authority.
Physical abuse	A form of abuse which leads to serious harm or death from severe physical assaults or non-accidental injuries. Examples can include; punching, kicking, shaking, throwing, burning, biting, or otherwise causing physical harm. Adult on child abuse is when an adult is the perpetrator, and a child is the victim. Child on adult abuse is when a child is a perpetrator, and an adult is the victim. Child on child abuse is when a child is a perpetrator, and another child is the victim. Care leaver abuse is when the care leaver is the victim.
Risk-taking behaviour	Serious harm or death due to the child engaging in dangerous activities where there is no evidence that the child intended to harm themselves.

Characteristic	Description
Road traffic collision	A road traffic collision occurs when a vehicle collides with another object. This can include a child or young person being present in the vehicle or the vehicle colliding with the child or young person.
Self-harm	Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body (NHS). Further classification includes suicide attempt (NICE).
Sexual abuse	Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Extra-familial harm is harm in contexts outside the child's family environment. Intra-familial harm is harm in contexts inside the child's family environment. Adult on child abuse is when an adult is the perpetrator, and a child is the victim. Child on child abuse is when a child is a perpetrator, and another child is the victim. Care leaver abuse is when the care leaver is the victim.
SUDI	Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy is the sudden, unexpected death of a child up to 1 year of age that could not have been anticipated as a significant possibility in the previous 24 hours.

Characteristic	Description
Suicide	Suicide is the act of a person who has killed themselves with intention. For the purpose of this notification those children or young people who are suspected to have died by suicide should also be categorised under this characteristic.
Trafficking	Trafficking is where children and young people are tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and then exploited, forced to work or sold (NSPCC).
Other	Any other characteristic.

Appendix B – Summary of Data collection questions

This section gives an overview of the information that is required to submit a serious incident notification for both children aged 0 – 17 and care leavers aged 18 – 24.

Your details

These questions apply to all notifications.

- name of person completing the form
- contact details
- role
- notifying local authority

Reason for notification

These questions apply to all notifications.

- Child aged 0 – 17
- Care leaver aged 18 – 24

These questions only apply where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

- if the child is a looked after child, a care leaver or neither
- if the incident relates to serious harm, death or other

About the incident

These questions only apply where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17.

- local authority where the incident took place
- responsible local authority
- incident date

This question applies to all notifications relating to the death of a child or care leaver.

- date of death

Characteristics

This selection applies to all notifications.

- record all relevant characteristics

Multi agency review

These questions only apply where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been seriously harmed or has died, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

- Do all three safeguarding partners agree to this notification
- Has the Director of Children's Services or their deputy approved this notification

Incident submission

This question only applies where the notification relates to a child aged 0 to 17 and the child has been seriously harmed or has died, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

- If the notification was delayed, explain why there was a delay in this notification

Incident related questions

These questions apply to all notifications.

- Enter a brief overview of the incident that took place
- Summarise any background information that helps explain the context of this incident
- Where the incident happened
- Who was present at the time of the incident
- Is there a live criminal / police investigation
- Have any regulators taken any immediate action
- Have other agencies or boards been notified of this incident

This question applies to notifications relating to children.

- How does the incident meet the criteria for this notification

These questions apply to notifications relating to children that have been harmed.

- What immediate actions have been taken to safeguard children
- Are there ongoing concerns about the immediate safety of any children involved

Child or care leaver details

These questions apply to all notifications.

- name

- date of birth
- sex
- gender
- ethnicity
- disability
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking child or previous unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

This question applies to notifications relating to children.

- legal status

Children's social care details

These questions apply to notifications relating to children.

If the child was known to children's social care, the following information requests are:

- current and previous support or services from children's social care including child in need plan and child protection plan details

Other agency details

These questions apply to all notifications.

If the child or care leaver was known to other agencies, provide details of their involvement with:

- police
- health services
- other relevant agencies
- if the notification relates to a care leaver, last contact date with social care

Details about where the child was living

These questions apply to notifications relating to children.

- where the child was living
- town or city and postcode of where the child was living

Education and early years provision details

These questions apply to notifications relating to children.

- type of education or early years provision
- name of establishment
- town or city and postcode of establishment
- if the child is on an Education, Health and Care Plan



Department
for Education

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