



18 December 2025

Message to all safeguarding partner leaders following the provisional local government finance settlement

Dear all,

Last November, Government more than doubled direct investment in prevention to over half a billion pounds for 2025/26 and launched the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme. Since then, many safeguarding partnerships have made a strong start at transforming services. But we must and will go further.

The local government policy statement, published on 20 November, confirmed over **£2.4 billion for FFP over the next three years**, including £866 million of new funding (£319 million from the Transformation Fund announced at the Spending Review and £547 million confirmed in the Policy Statement) – all ringfenced for prevention. This investment should strengthen partnerships' ability to identify and respond to harms inside and outside the home, ensuring children and families receive support to stay safely together.

To realise these ambitions, **funding must add to – not displace – existing investment in prevention** (such as targeted early help and child in need services and any other non-statutory spending). We recognise the tough budget decisions safeguarding partners face, but deprioritising prevention risks perpetuating the cycle of late, costly and disruptive interventions. To rebalance the system, drive down costs and improve outcomes for children and families, safeguarding partners must sustain existing shared spend on prevention. This funding should be used alongside existing prevention spend to provide additional investment in support. We will monitor spend through quarterly FFP returns and support you in demonstrating the impact of increased investment to your residents, Councillors and local partners. We expect these reforms and additional investment to shift the overall profile of spending towards earlier help for families. Draft grant conditions have been published alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Stronger partnership working is essential. Statutory safeguarding partners already share a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – this must now translate to joint action, funding and shared accountability for

delivering reform. Colleagues in health, police and local authorities must work hand-in-hand with education providers, childcare settings and other agencies to meet the needs of their communities. They should work together to agree how reform will be delivered, resourced and designed to suit local context – while recognising the opportunities reforms to ICBs, police and local government provide to improve local service delivery.

In 2025/26, we set expectations for local authorities to work with their safeguarding partners to co-design and plan the end-to-end system. In years 2 and 3, partnerships should focus on delivery and adapting multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to facilitate the changes needed to our shared systems. Alongside this, we expect safeguarding partnerships to ensure dedicated and expert roles in multi-agency child protection teams. Partners should first consider how existing resource can be reorganised and sustained to achieve reform goals in the long term. Local authorities can also use grant funding to support safeguarding partners to deliver reforms suited to their local context. Mechanisms, such as section 75 agreements with health partners, can support this approach.

We expect all safeguarding partnerships to evidence delivery of reforms through quarterly monitoring data and delivery plans, signed off by all lead safeguarding partners and submitted by the local authority. We also encourage local authorities to participate in the voluntary targeted early help annual data collection (TEHADC), which is vital for understanding the impact of reforms and is likely to become mandatory in future.

FFP is central to the most significant reform of children's services in a generation. Through landmark legislation in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and increased investment, distributed through the new Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) formula, we will shift the focus of the children's social care system to early support to keep families together and fix the broken care market to put children first. This transformation is complex, but essential.

Thank you all for your continued dedication and to all staff across children's social care, police, health, education for your continued hard work.

Yours sincerely,

Josh MacAlister MP



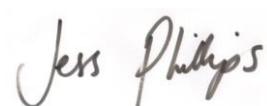
Minister for Children and Families

Ashley Dalton MP



Minister for Public Health and Prevention

Jess Phillips MP



Minister for Safeguarding and Violence Against Women and Girls

