



# SAFEGUARDING UPDATE - WHAT DO PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

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## Learning from serious safeguarding incidents - What parents need to know

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has published its latest analysis of serious safeguarding incidents involving children. The findings provide important reminders for everyone involved in keeping children safe.

### Who is in your child's life?

One of the strongest findings concerned adults who were involved in children's lives but were unknown to, overlooked or unseen by professionals.

This could be a father, stepfather, parent's partner or another family member. In almost one third (30%) of the reviews, a male involved in the child's life had been identified as a significant theme.

For parents, this highlights the importance of schools knowing about significant adults and changes within your child's home or family life, particularly where someone regularly cares for, stays with or collects your child.

### Why sharing information matters

Something that may seem unimportant on its own can become significant when combined with other information.

### Changes in your child's:

**behaviour | attendance | sleep | eating | mood | relationships | appearance | home circumstances**

may help school staff build a better picture of what your child is experiencing.

If something significant changes at home, tell your child's school. You don't need to wait until you think it has become a safeguarding concern.

### Parents sometimes need support too

The review also highlighted families where parents were experiencing difficulties including mental health needs, alcohol or substance use, housing problems and their own previous experiences of abuse or adversity.

**Asking for help early can make a real difference.** Schools can listen, offer support and, where appropriate, help families access other services.

### Working together keeps children safer

Keeping children safe relies on parents, schools and other professionals sharing important information and working together.

If you are worried about your child, or another child, speak to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

### Key message

- Small pieces of information can help build a much bigger picture.
- Share changes. Ask for help. Talk to us.

Working together helps us understand children's lives and keep them safe.

## Domestic abuse - why leaving isn't always easy, what parents need to know

Women's Aid's Nowhere to Turn 2026 report highlights the difficulties some women and children face when trying to escape domestic abuse and find somewhere safe to live.

The report draws on ten years of the No Woman Turned Away project, which supports survivors who face additional barriers when trying to access refuge accommodation.

### What are the barriers?

**Finding safety can be particularly difficult for survivors who have:**

**no recourse to public funds | insecure immigration status | mental health needs | substance use needs | disabilities | other complex support needs**

Women's Aid found a significant shortage of refuge spaces able to meet some of these additional needs.

### Asking for help doesn't always mean the danger has ended

A parent may have disclosed domestic abuse, sought help or decided to leave but still be unable to access suitable accommodation.

### This is an important reminder that we should never ask:

"Why don't they just leave?"

Instead, we should recognise that leaving an abusive relationship can be complicated and that survivors may face significant practical, financial and emotional barriers to reaching safety.

### What can domestic abuse mean for children?

Children can be affected by domestic abuse even when they are not directly assaulted themselves.

They may hear or see abuse, experience coercive and controlling behaviour within their home, worry about a parent or feel frightened and uncertain about what will happen next.

### Parents may notice changes in a child's:

**behaviour | sleep | eating | mood | attendance | concentration | relationships | confidence**

Children may not always be able to explain what is worrying them, so changes in behaviour can be an important form of communication.

### Support can make a difference

The report also contains an important message of hope. Following support from the No Woman Turned Away project, **69.7%** of women had at least one positive outcome, **47.6%** had a new housing outcome and **59.8%** said their safety had improved.

### Talk to us

If domestic abuse is affecting you or your child, you can speak confidentially to your child's school.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) can listen, consider how your child may be affected and help you access appropriate support.

You don't have to wait until a situation reaches crisis point before asking for help.

### Key message

- **Domestic abuse is never the survivor's responsibility**
- **Leaving may not be simple, and asking for help can be an important first step**

If you are worried about yourself, your child or someone you know, reach out for support.

### Free resources for parents and carers

**For the article: [Learning from serious safeguarding incidents - what parents need to know](#)**

**NSPCC - Support and advice for families:** Free information and practical advice for parents and carers covering a wide range of issues that can affect children and family life. Resources include children's mental health, relationships, family difficulties, staying safe online and recognising when a child may need additional help. Parents can also find information about what to do if they are worried about their own child or another child.

### Find out more:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/>

**NSPCC - Free Helpline for adults worried about a child:** Parents and carers who would prefer to speak to someone can contact the NSPCC Helpline for free advice and support. Child protection specialists can listen to concerns, offer advice and, where necessary, take action to help protect a child. Parents can seek advice even if they are unsure whether what they have noticed is a safeguarding concern. **Freephone:** 0800 800 5000

### Find out more:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/our-services/nspcc-helpline/>

**NSPCC - Keeping children safe:** A useful collection of free resources to help parents understand different aspects of keeping children safe. It includes advice about family life, children's mental health, staying safe online, activities outside the home and recognising possible signs of abuse. It can also help parents start conversations with children about difficult or sensitive subjects.

### Find out more:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/>

**For the article: [Domestic abuse - why leaving isn't always easy](#)**

**Women's Aid - Information and support:** Women's Aid provides free information for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, as well as friends and family who may be worried about someone. Resources can help survivors recognise different forms of abuse, understand their options, think about safety and find specialist domestic abuse services.

### Find out more:

<https://womensaid.org.uk/information-support/>

**Women's Aid - Find local domestic abuse services:** Women's Aid provides a searchable directory to help survivors find specialist domestic abuse services across the UK. This can help parents locate local support, including services offering advice, outreach and refuge accommodation.

### Find out more:

<https://womensaid.org.uk/information-support/womens-aid-directory/>

**Refuge - National Domestic Abuse Helpline:** The National Domestic Abuse Helpline provides free, confidential support 24 hours a day for women experiencing domestic abuse in England. Advisers can listen without judgement, help survivors understand their options and support them to make decisions about their safety. Family members and friends who are worried about someone can also contact the helpline for advice. **Freephone:** 0800 2000 247 - **available 24 hours a day**

### Find out more:

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

**GOV.UK - Domestic abuse: how to get help:** Free government information explaining how to recognise domestic abuse and where to find support. It explains that domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence and can include coercive control, emotional abuse, economic abuse, sexual abuse, threats, intimidation and online abuse.

### Find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-abuse-how-to-get-help>

**NSPCC - Domestic abuse and children:** Free information explaining how domestic abuse can affect children and the signs parents and carers might notice, including changes in behaviour, anxiety, sleep difficulties, problems at school and difficulties with relationships. The resource also signposts specialist support for parents, children and young people and explains what adults can do if they are worried about a child.

### Find out more:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>

**GOV.UK - Specialist domestic abuse support:** A useful directory of specialist support for people who may face additional barriers when seeking help. It includes resources relating to children and young people, economic abuse, technology-facilitated abuse, housing, welfare benefits and immigration status, making it particularly relevant to the issues highlighted in Nowhere to Turn 2026.

### Find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-get-help-for-specific-needs-or-situations>

### If you or your child are in immediate danger

**If there is an immediate risk of harm, call 999 and ask for the police.**

**If you are unable to speak when calling 999 from a mobile, listen to the operator and, when prompted, press 55 to be transferred to the police.**