**The role and responsibilities of the Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The [Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) (EYFS) states that “In every setting, a practitioner must be designated to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children. The Lead practitioner is responsible for liaison with local statutory children’s services agency and with the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP)”.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2#:~:text=It%20sets%20out%20the%20legal%20duties%20you%20must) (KCSIE) states that “The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems in place). This should be stated within DSL’s job description.”

The DSL carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should have the appropriate status and authority within the setting to carry out the duties of the post. They should be given additional time, funding, training, resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively.

**Deputy designated safeguarding leads**

Where a setting appoints one or more deputy DSL’s the deputies should be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the deputy role should be stated within their job description.

The DSL can delegate specific tasks or activities for the deputy DSL to complete or oversee, but ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection remains with the settings DSL.

**Availability**

There must be a DSL (or a deputy) available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns, whenever the setting is open. Ideally the DSL (or deputy) should be available on site and in person. It is a matter for individual setting, working with the DSL, to define what “available” means and whether in exceptional circumstances availability via phone. It is a matter for the setting and the DSL to arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities.

**Manage referrals**

The DSL is expected to refer cases:

* of suspected abuse and neglect in line with local guidance and to support staff who raise concerns; [Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership](https://www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/)
* to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme; [Channel and Prevent Multi-Agency Panel (PMAP) guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance)
* to Disclosure and Barring Service and Ofsted where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child; [Disclosure and Barring Service - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)
* to the police where a crime may have been committed. NSPCC - [When to call the police](https://www.npcc.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/publications/publications-log/2020/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf) should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

**Working with others**

The DSL is expected to:

* act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff; providing advice and support on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and interagency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and to contributing to the assessment of children.
* act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners.
* liaise with manager/ committee chair or HR- especially around ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations.
* liaise with the professional who is leading the investigation and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member.
* liaise with relevant staff (including Key person) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) to consider the child’s needs are holistically considered.
* promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers, providing early help support and signposting and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances.
* work with all relevant staff, to ensure there is good knowledge and understanding of all of the children and their needs, including those children who have or have had a social worker, recognising that when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children’s educational outcomes.
* support staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to those who need it to enable them to achieve their best outcomes.

**Information sharing and managing the child protection file**

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date, kept confidential and stored securely. In line with EYFS, [Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)](https://ico.org.uk/)and [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice) It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Safeguarding and child protection records should include:

* a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern.
* details of how the concern was followed up and resolved.
* a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Where children leave the setting, the DSL should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new setting/school as soon as possible ideally before or within 5 working days of the child starting the new setting/ school. This should be transferred separately from any other files on the child being shared, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

Receiving settings/schools should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs, are aware as required. In addition to the child protection file, the DSL should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new setting/school in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the next setting/school.

**Increasing Awareness**

The DSL should:

* ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the setting’s safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including new, part-time or volunteer staff.
* ensure the setting’s child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with the Registered Person/Body regarding this.
* ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents know referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the setting in this.
* link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies, procedures and guidance and required audit processes from the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership (SSCP).
* help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with appropriate staff.

**Training, knowledge and skills**

The DSL (and any deputies) should complete training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the DSL role. It is recommended that this training should be updated at least every two years. In addition to the DSL training the DSL should complete Raising Awareness in Safeguarding and Child Protection training, Prevent awareness training, FGM awareness training and online safety training.

Training should provide the DSL with a good understanding of

* how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs and factors that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk.
* the local early help and child protection processes and procedures as well as the responsibilities of other agencies.
* working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
* the importance of the role the DSL has in providing information and support to children social care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
* the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children’s behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes.
* the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers.
* the importance of information sharing, both within the setting, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners.
* the requirements of the Prevent duty and can provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation.
* the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe.
* can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online.
* obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses; and,
* encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the setting may put in place to protect them.

In addition to the formal training set out above, the DSL’s knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSL’s, attending DSL network sessions or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

**Providing support to staff**

The DSL should work to support and advise staff, building their knowledge and confidence on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

* ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes
* support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked.

**Listen to the voice of children and understand their views.**

The DSL should help to embed a whole setting approach to safeguarding where there is:

* a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the setting may put in place to protect them; and
* understanding that children may have difficulties in approaching staff about their circumstances
* a key person and trusted relationship that will help children and their families to raise any concerns/ worries or need for support