

Safeguarding Briefing

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Sharing Information and Safeguarding - Information Commissioner's Office

Sharing information between organisations is a vital part of keeping children safe. Schools, local authorities, health services and the police can only act quickly and effectively when they each hold the right information at the right time. When safeguarding breaks down, it is often because key information wasn't shared early enough, or wasn't shared with the people who needed it.

At the same time, we all have a responsibility to handle children's personal information carefully and lawfully. It's completely normal for staff to feel unsure about what can or cannot be shared.

The important message from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is clear: data protection law should never be a barrier to safeguarding. If a child is at risk, you can and should share relevant information with the appropriate professionals.

Recently, the ICO has added clearer, education-focused guidance to sit alongside their existing 10-Step Guide to Sharing Information to Safeguard Children. Nothing significant has changed in the law, this is simply extra reassurance and examples designed to help schools, nurseries and colleges feel more confident.

Useful Links

ICO education-sector guidance:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/sharing-information-to-safeguard-children-and-young-people-education-sector>

Guidance for education sector on data-sharing - overview (Blake Morgan):

<https://www.blakemorgan.co.uk/ico-launches-new-guidance-for-education-sector-on-data-sharing-to-support-child-safeguarding/>

ICO "Think. Check. Share." A4 poster (good for staff rooms):

<https://ico.org.uk/media2/migrated/4026889/tcs-a4-infographic-share-information-to-protect-a-child.pdf>

Domestic Abuse Support App - Bright Sky by Hestia

Domestic abuse, whether towards a female or male partner, can significantly affect the children who live in that environment. Exposure to violence, coercion or ongoing emotional manipulation disrupts a child's sense of safety and can influence their behaviour, relationships and engagement in learning.

These situations are often hard to spot. Many victims work to hide what is happening, particularly from official agencies, due to fear of consequences for the abusive partner or worries about major upheaval for the family.

Hestia is a London-based charity that supports adults and children in crisis, delivering frontline services and campaigning nationally on issues such as domestic abuse, modern slavery and mental health. They have created the Bright Sky app, a free and discreet tool that helps people recognise signs of abuse, access specialist support and record concerns safely.

The Bright Sky app provides:

- A simple tool to help someone recognise signs of abuse and understand whether a relationship feels unsafe.
- A secure, optional journal for recording incidents or concerns that can later be shared with a trusted person or agency.
- A directory of national and local support services, making it easier to find the right help quickly.

To find out more, please follow the link: <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>

Question of the Week

What are the subtle signs of coercive control that school staff are most likely to notice in a child or parent—and how do these differ from more overt forms of domestic abuse?

Answer

Subtle signs of coercive control vs overt domestic abuse

In Parents or Carers

- A partner speaks for them, attends every meeting, or closely monitors interactions.
- The parent appears anxious about saying the “wrong” thing or making decisions.
- Sudden withdrawal from school life or becoming harder to contact.
- References to not being “allowed” to spend money or attend events.

In Children

- Anxiety, hyper-vigilance, or trying hard not to upset one parent.
- Becoming withdrawn, overly compliant, or suddenly perfectionistic.
- Avoiding friendships or activities due to home restrictions.
- Hesitant or inconsistent explanations about home circumstances.

How this might differ from overt domestic violence

- Coercive control is pattern-based: the harm comes from a series of behaviours over time, not one incident — each action may seem small, but together they remove freedom and create fear.
- It is psychological and gradual, and not necessarily associated with visible injuries.
- It shows up through fear, restriction, and loss of autonomy, rather than obvious physical harm.

For more information about coercive control:

Women’s Aid – “What is coercive control?”

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/>

NSPCC Learning – Domestic Abuse

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2023/impact-coercive-control-children-young-people>

GOV.UK – Statutory Guidance on Controlling or Coercive Behaviour
(Serious Crime Act)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-statutory-guidance-framework>

RSE Skills for SEND Learners Webinar - Sex Education Forum

Supporting pupils with SEND is hugely rewarding but never simple, especially when it comes to relationships and sex education (RSE). The core content is challenging for any group, and working with SEND learners adds extra layers of complexity that require skill, sensitivity and creativity. This interactive webinar will look at RSE for KS4–5 learners with SEND in a way that's right for their age and stage, building practical skills for adult life, including healthy relationships, consent, contraception and safer decision-making.

The Sex Education Forum is running a focused webinar later in the week, which may be useful for colleagues delivering RSE to KS4 and KS5 learners with SEND.

Date: Wednesday 26th November 2025

Time: 13:00 to 15:00

Cost: £65 (members) / £75 (non-members)

Booking Link:

<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/training/calendar/rse-skills-ks4-ks5-learners-send-preparing-adult-relationships>

Prevent Guidance - Department for Education

The Prevent duty is one of the safeguarding responsibilities placed on schools. As people who work with students every day, school staff are often among the first to notice concerning changes in a young person's behaviour, interests, or online activity.

Recent Home Office statistics* show that over half of all Prevent referrals now relate to children under 18, with 11–17 year-olds making up the largest group. At the same time, the single biggest category of concern is now “vulnerability present but no clear ideology or CT risk” – children and young people who may be consuming violent or extremist content or

showing worrying behaviours, but who are not aligned with a specific extremist group or cause.

Prevent can be complex to navigate, which is why Regional Prevent Education Coordinators (RPECs) provide direct support to schools. The Department for Education has now published new dates for Prevent workshops, alongside updated guidance on the Prevent duty and the role of RPECs.

There is specific virtual Prevent training available for early years foundation stage staff, independent schools, and governors and trustees in schools. In addition, Designated Safeguarding Leads can access dedicated virtual training. The DSL session dates are:

- Monday 1 December 2025, 3:30pm–4:45pm
- Tuesday 10 February 2026, 3:30pm–4:45pm
- Wednesday 22 April 2026, 3:30pm–4:45pm
- Tuesday 23 June 2026, 3:30pm–4:45pm

You can find all the dates and how to book here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regional-prevent-education-coordinators>

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-prevent-to-march-2024/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2023-to-march-2024>

Forthcoming Courses

Advanced Safeguarding for Designated Safeguarding Leads

"I just wanted to say that I thought today's training was absolutely fantastic. By a mile it was the most engaging training I have done."

Next live online Advanced Safeguarding Course:

Wednesday 26th November 2025

[Book Online](#)

The on-demand version is available year-round and is updated regularly

[Book Online](#)

Safeguarding Update and Review:

Thursday 27th November 2025, 4.00-5.30pm (live online session)

[Book Online](#)

Key areas include: the new safeguarding requirements in early years, the

Operation Encompass mandatory guidance for the police and staff behaviour and professional boundaries, drawing on the review into the conduct of headteacher Neil Foden.

Take a look at our other courses here:

<https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/availablecourses>

Safeguarding.Pro

Many of our online courses are available in [Safeguarding.Pro](#) with full-year access included.

Are you a busy DSL with no time?

Need a place to ask questions. find support and download resources

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