

# WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

## Debbie Innes SAFEGUARDING January 2026



### BEHAVIOUR AND SAFEGUARDING

For those of us who believe that we communicate through our behaviour and children particularly communicate with their behaviour - the response to any challenges that children are facing should be treated as safeguarding first. For some time, the rhetoric from the DfE through their behaviour guru has been to insist that 'no excuses' behaviour policies are the way forward. Just before Christmas a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review was published. This review called into question these oppressive behaviour management techniques and we have The Learning Trust in Hackney and the report's author, Sir Alan Wood for shining a light on the harm that can happen when behaviour is managed without thinking about children and their needs.

The full report can be found [here](#) - we have summarised and made comment (in bold) below:

- Actions of school leaders and teachers were described as cruel and detrimental to pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Reports were made of the use for bullying, harassment and intimidation tactics by teachers, including shouting, public humiliation and verbal abuse.

**These behaviours should be considered to be emotional abuse under the 1989 Children Act.**

- The school's academic success was at the cost of a significant majority who were 'more vulnerable, had SEND or struggled to conform to an inflexible system'

**It is vital that the needs of these children and young people are paramount in any organisation and success should not be judged on the academic success of others without care for these individuals.**

- Training in behaviour management was weak

**Staff did not regularly have training in how to manage classrooms effectively.**

**In our view staff should be engaged in meaningful discussion and training in how to ensure that calm and purposeful behaviour enables ALL to thrive (alongside our associate organisation [For The Child](#) we can support you with exploring this).**

- Oversight and governance were weak.

**Information given to governors was scant and they were not enabled to ask probing questions to ensure that they had a full view of what was going on in the school.**

**In our view governors have an extremely important and difficult role in schools - the same for trustees in charities. We can help governors to understand their role in oversight and how to really know the organisations they serve ensuring that ALL are kept safe.**

- The School's response to complaints was weak

**The complaints process was confusing and parents reported that the process was unnecessarily combative.**

**Like low level concerns, complaints should be seen as learning opportunities for the organisation and should be managed objectively and where necessary with independent oversight or management. We can help support you to have an effective process and can provide independent complaint management.**

## Child Safeguarding Practice Review - Sara Sharif

In November 2025 the review into the tragic death of Sara Sharif was published. You can read the full report on the link including the list of recommendations on page 54.

There are some key things that we think are brought out in the review that all organisations working with children and young people need to think about:

- The use of full safeguarding chronology summaries to understand complex situations for children. How are these prepared and used forensically and how are these used to identify lack of consistency and lies from parents?
- How are we making sure that we triangulate information, not relying on just one source of information and don't give too much weight to explanations from parents who may be trying to conceal abuse.
- Understanding that children and young people are not likely to disclose and it is up to us as professionals to ask, gently probe and be curious about what happens to children and young people when they are at home or in the community.



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- Where do we go to explore and be challenged about our decision making - supervision?
- Understanding of domestic abuse, perpetrator control and grooming of professionals. This also includes a clear understanding that separation from a perpetrator is not necessarily a protective factor.
- Understanding of parental responsibilities, legal orders and what this means for information sharing with family members.
- How we routinely liaise with professionals involved with other family members (and understanding that data protection does not preclude sharing of safeguarding information).
- How do we know the impact of plans when they are put in place and how do we challenge when change is not evident. This also applies to escalating when children's services minimise what we are concerned about.
- How well informed are we about cultural differences and who can we ask when we are not sure?

**We can support you with all of this in your organisation - starting with a professional conversation about where you are now and how you can continue to improve.**

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## Things to look out for in 2026

- Restrictive Interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools – this was issued just before Christmas 2025 and comes into force in April 2026. Our associate organisation For The Child can help you with this should you need support.
- Children's wellbeing and schools bill:
  - Embedding schools in local safeguarding arrangements
  - Single consistent identifier across all agencies
- Register of children not in school
- Implementing the new RHSE guidance that was published in August 2025
- The long-awaited guidance for gender questioning pupils
- Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education – with only minor changes for the last few years and safeguarding continuing to develop a pace perhaps this year is the year that KCSIE finally catches up!

## How can Debbie Innes Safeguarding support you?

We can help you make sure that your safeguarding culture is as good as it can be and that your staff are confident in keeping those who care for safe. We do this through

- Audits and reviews
- Action planning
- Ongoing support
- Bespoke training

As always we also have a number of planned training sessions and activities.

Please do check our Safeguarding Academy website to see up and coming DSL training and a number of free webinars:

<https://debbieinnessafeguarding.learnworlds.com/>

## IN SEPTEMBER 2026 WE ARE LAUNCHING A LEVEL 4 SAFEGUARDING QUALIFICATION

This course will support those who are already leading safeguarding as DSLs and DDSLs. It will form year 1 of a part time safeguarding foundation degree. Please register now for this exciting new qualification

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