



Safeguarding Children Learning and Development;

Guidance for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals.

Version 2.0
Date of Issue: December2022
Date of Review: December 2025

Introduction

The primary responsibility for safeguarding children and young people and promoting their welfare rests with their parents or carers. They provide help, support and protection to their children. Extended family, friends, neighbours and the wider community can help parents and carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children¹. However, those who work with children, young people or families, in whatever capacity, have a particular responsibility to promote their welfare and ensure that they are safe. Nurses, midwives and allied health professionals play an essential part in ensuring that children and families receive the care, support and services they need to promote children's health and development.

The multiagency 'Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework (LDSF) has been developed, regularly revised and issued by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI). The current version 2020- 2023² has been informed by the SBNI's Strategic Plan, which is also updated regularly, and its associated vision statement, function and values. The Child Safeguarding LDSF contributes to the improvement of child protection and safeguarding training and education in Northern Ireland by setting out the key minimum learning outcomes to equip staff and volunteers in organisations, with the skills, knowledge and competence to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people, within the remit of their roles and responsibilities.

Learning and development encompasses a wide range of activities designed to improve the performance of nursing, midwifery and allied health professional staff. It can include self-directed learning such as reflective practice or peer review, workplace learning for example appraisal, supervision and shadowing or formal learning such as attendance at courses, workshops, conferences and eLearning.

Guidance

The SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF is a multiagency document. This supporting guidance document has been developed and revised by the Regional Nursing,

¹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

² <https://www.safeguardingni.org/resources/learning-and-development-strategy-framework>

Midwifery and Allied Health Professional (AHP) Forum. It will assist the nursing, midwifery and allied health professional workforce to interpret and implement the LDSF, in planning opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in order to improve their performance and competence in relation to safeguarding children and young people. The guidance can be also be used to identify the learning and development needs of both university staff and nursing, midwifery and AHP pre and post registration students depending on their role and responsibility. This document should be read and used in conjunction with the overarching LDSF³.

It replaces:

Guidance for Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals in relation to implementing the SBNI 'Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework' (PHA, 2016)

Target Audience

This guidance document is relevant for all nursing, midwifery, allied health professional staff, including pre-registration students, non-registered/support staff and their education and training providers, including staff who:

- Are in contact at any time across a range of settings with children, young people and their families and carers.
- Have contact with parents/carers who care for children who are vulnerable, subject to Looked After Children Reviews, have been identified as a Child in Need or whose names have been placed on the Child Protection Register.
- Have contact with adults who may pose a risk to children and young people.

Objectives

- Improve the competence of the nursing, midwifery and allied health professional workforce involved in child protection and safeguarding.
- Provide consistency regarding content and delivery of safeguarding learning and development opportunities for pre-registrant students.

³ <https://www.safeguardingni.org/resources/learning-and-development-strategy-framework>

NB: Future links may require updating. Access can be obtained by searching 'learning and development strategy and framework on www.safeguardingni.org

- Provide a standardised approach in relation to implementing the SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework.
- Support staff and managers to identify gaps in knowledge and skills, assist with induction, appraisal, on-going training and development needs and preparing for career progression.
- Inform commissioners and those developing and providing continuing education and training programmes, including employers and individuals, to ensure that appropriate and validated programmes are in place, accessible and delivered at the right level for all staff.
- Support nurses, midwives and allied health professionals to meet their professional standards and registration requirements.

Professional Standards

The **Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC) Code (2015)**⁴ states that nurses and midwives must:

(17.1) “take all reasonable steps to protect people who are vulnerable or at risk from harm, neglect or abuse”

(17.2) “share information if you believe someone may be at risk of harm, in line with the laws relating to the disclosure of information,” and

(17.3) “have knowledge of and keep to the relevant laws and policies about protecting and caring for vulnerable people”

The **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC, 2016)**⁵ stipulates that all registrants must:

(3.4) ‘keep up to date with and follow law, our guidance and other requirements related to your practice’

7.3) ‘take appropriate action if you have concerns about the safety or well-being of children or vulnerable adults’

⁴ [The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards-of-conduct/)

⁵ [Standards of conduct, performance and ethics | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/)

Using the SBNI Learning and Development Framework (LDSF)

The SBNI LDSF consists of 4 levels which are not incremental but offer a continuum of learning and development. It is important to refer to the SBNI Safeguarding Learning and Development Framework in identifying the learning and development needs of staff. Professional judgement will be required in determining the learning and development needs within the range of nursing, midwifery and allied health professional staff in relation to the level required to meet the staff member's job role and the most suitable format to achieve this.

At each level, the framework identifies safeguarding knowledge and skills, key learning outcomes, target audience, potential development opportunities and organisation responsibility for implementation. **It is important to note that if a practitioner attends a course or undertakes learning and development at a higher level they do not need to also undertake learning at a lower level** (See appendix 1 for overview).

There are a number of different unidisciplinary, multidisciplinary/multi agency training providers who deliver formal training via courses, modules and other learning events that will meet the needs of practitioners at the various levels. Trusts should agree which best suits the learning and development needs of their staff.

Associated Guidance Documents

The following guidance documents compliment the SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People: Roles and Competencies for Healthcare Staff (Royal College of Nursing, 2019).⁶
- Looked After Children: Roles and Competencies for Healthcare Staff (Royal College of Nursing, 2020).⁷

⁶ <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/Royal-College-Of-Nursing/Documents/Publications/2019/January/007-366.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/rcn-looked-after-children-roles-and-competencies-of-healthcare-staff-uk-pub-009486>

NB: Future links may require updating. Access can be obtained by searching titles at www.rcn.org.uk

Written for healthcare staff only, they also describe the competencies as a set of abilities that enable staff to effectively safeguard, protect and promote the welfare health and wellbeing of children and young people. The competencies are a combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are required for effective practice.

Both documents identify 5 levels as opposed to the SBNI Child safeguarding LDSF 4 levels. The levels broadly reflect those in the latter document but provide more detail and are useful for cross reference when planning job descriptions, KSF outlines, induction, appraisal, supervision, and learning and development opportunities for staff. The 5th level, refers to strategic Designated posts which is included in level 4 of the SBNI Safeguarding Children LDSF.

Roles and Responsibilities

Organisations

Organisations have a responsibility to:

- Ensure the SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF is fully integrated into internal governance/professional assurance arrangements
- Ensure all nursing, midwifery and allied health professional staff have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competence; to effectively safeguard and protect children and young people and to meet the requirement of the SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF.

Managers

All nursing, midwifery and allied health professional managers have a responsibility to:

- Introduce SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF to newly appointed staff during induction.
- Ensure staff in their sphere of responsibility are aware of the minimum level of child safeguarding learning and development required to fulfil duties of their post.
- Consider the current levels of individual staff and identify future development needs, commensurate with their roles and responsibilities.

- Maintain an up-to-date record of safeguarding children learning and development activities for relevant staff group, which can be submitted for quality assurance and audit activity.
- Include SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF levels in KSF outlines, job descriptions as appropriate.
- Consider learning needs of staff when undertaking annual training needs analysis.
- Contribute to the commissioning process and deliver safeguarding children training as appropriate to meet the team/service needs.
- Support staff with personal and professional learning opportunities and include relevant level of competence for practitioner in annual appraisal and safeguarding children supervision.
- Identify gaps in knowledge and skills of staff and assist with planning ongoing training and development needs and for preparing for career progression.
- Promote a culture of learning.

Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Education and Training Providers

Nursing, midwifery and allied health professional education providers represented on the regional Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Forum have a responsibility to:

- Introduce SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF to newly appointed education staff during induction.
- Ensure staff in their sphere of responsibility are aware of the minimum level of child safeguarding learning and development is required to fulfil duties of their post.
- Consider the current levels of individual staff and identify future development needs, commensurate with their roles and responsibilities. Maintain an up-to-date record of safeguarding children learning and development activities within the relevant staff group, which can be submitted for quality assurance and audit activity

- Ensure pre and post registration training and education programmes support nurses, midwives and allied health professionals to gain the appropriate knowledge, skills and competence to effectively safeguard and protect children and young people and to meet the requirement of the SBNI Child Safeguarding LDSF.
- Identify levels of training in programme outlines and associated flyers for staff. Contribute to the commissioning process and deliver safeguarding children training in response to annual training needs analysis.

Conclusion

An appropriately trained and supported nursing, midwifery and allied health professional work force is central to safeguarding children and young people in Northern Ireland. Organisations must invest in training their staff to ensure all those who come into contact with children/young people understand their contribution to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and are competent and confident to carry out their role.

Review

This guidance document will be reviewed on a three yearly basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose, and reflects any relevant developments in safeguarding practice, policy and legislation.

Appendix 1: Overview of SBNI Safeguarding Levels

This table provides an overview only and is by no means exhaustive please refer to the SBNI framework for full details.

| Level | Target Audience | Examples (list not exhaustive) | Overview of Knowledge and skills and learning outcomes | Development Requirement |
|-------|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | All staff/volunteers within the organisation. | Administration clerical staff who support nursing, midwifery and allied health professional services Non-registrant support staff working in areas with no direct contact with children and young people, adult carers/parents e.g. elderly care. | Basic knowledge of signs and indicators of child abuse and Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and respond appropriately to child safeguarding issues, understand own role and that of others. | Minimum 3 yearly. Could take form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A leaflet on induction or refresher training, E-Learning programme Corporate/departmental induction Face to face induction/ awareness raising sessions |
| 2 | All staff/volunteers who have direct contact with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people. Adult carers/parents and those who have regular contact with children. Adults known or suspected of posing a risk to children and young people. | All registered nurses, midwives, allied health professionals. All non-registrant/support staff working in such environments. | More in depth knowledge of signs and indicators of child abuse and contributory factors, trauma- informed practice, legislation, policy, referral process, support services, confidentiality and information sharing, record keeping. Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and respond to children and young people's safeguarding issues, understand own role and that of others, contribute to the assessment and management of risk, understand own behaviours and boundaries. | Minimum of 3 hours face to face formal training every 3 years as a stand-alone event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face E-Learning Relevant safeguarding conferences or child protection events |
| 3 | All staff-who could potentially contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and evaluating the needs of children and parental capacity where there are safeguarding issues | Those nurses, midwives, AHPs who have on-going interventions with children, young people and their families and /or those in a managerial/supervisory role who are required to have a higher level of knowledge to support other staff. | Knowledge of key tasks to safeguard children, thresholds of significant harm, trauma-informed practice, national, local and regional policy and procedure, standards and guidance, models of assessment, research, | Minimum 3 hours, 3 yearly. Access to learning and development activity that enables staff/volunteers to develop skills in level 3: |

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|---|--|--|--|---|
| | | <p>Midwives, health visitors /school nurses/family nurses/LAC nurses/ specialist public health roles, mental health/learning disability, CAMHS nurses, allied health professionals working in child development clinic, school teams and paediatric teams.</p> <p>Nursing, midwifery, and allied health professional managers/supervisors/team leads, allied health professional heads of service.</p> | <p>inquiries and case management review findings, supervision models, court processes</p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop working relationships with other professionals, • understand role of self and others • work with others to meet the needs of children, • identify learning from case management reviews, • contribute to interagency safeguarding assessments, risk analysis and safeguarding plans, • engage and challenge families in safeguarding, • respectfully challenge decision making and escalate, • understand the impact of child abuse and neglect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face/direct training • Relevant safeguarding conferences or child protection events • Other learning and development activity for example safeguarding workshop or SBNI formal learning event • Contributing to Individual Agency/Case Management Review process. |
| 4 | Those staff with specialist safeguarding roles and responsibilities. | Safeguarding children nurse specialists, designated/named nurses for safeguarding children, dedicated safeguarding leads in nursing, midwifery and allied health professional services. | <p>Knowledge of expertise in development of policy, guidelines and protocols. Knowledge to contribute to international, national, regional and local governance, strategic and operational processes.</p> <p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop effective professional judgement and decision-making skills, • investigate safeguarding issues, • provide verbal and written evidence, • ensure effective interagency working, • contribute to effective governance arrangements | <p>Minimum 3 hours, 3 yearly but the specialist nature of these posts will require access to continuous learning opportunities.</p> <p>Access to higher learning and development activity that enables staff/volunteers to develop skills in level 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face/direct training • Relevant safeguarding conferences or child protection events • Other learning and development activity for example safeguarding workshop or SBNI formal learning event |

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|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet ongoing professional development standards and other requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand- alone safeguarding children university modules • Safeguarding leadership , degree or masters level programmes/courses • Safeguarding supervision for supervisors, programmes • Training relating to Case Management or Domestic Homicide Reviews • Contributing to or leading on Individual Agency/Case Management Review process. |
|--|--|--|--|---|

NB: important to note that if a practitioner attends a course at a higher level they do not need to also undertake learning at a lower level