

Children's services and violence prevention summary of recommendations

Extra-familial harm

1

LEADERSHIP

Make safeguarding children from extra-familial harm (EFH), including serious violence, a core strategic priority.

Why? EFH is becoming a more prominent feature in children's services assessments. However, not all forms of EFH, particularly serious violence, are treated as core safeguarding priorities.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Clearly define EFH and apply statutory thresholds consistently.
- B. Agree shared outcomes for what safeguarding responses to EFH should achieve for children and monitor impact.
- C. Identify and address discrimination in EFH responses.

2

PATHWAY

Provide one pathway, one plan and one owner for children affected by EFH.

Why? In many areas, responses to EFH run alongside, rather than within, the established safeguarding pathway, resulting in multiple parallel processes and children left without a single overarching plan, clear oversight or consistent response.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Map the local system for coordinating responses to EFH.
- B. Provide an integrated safeguarding pathway with clear routes to the wider system of support.
- C. Review the use of multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) and similar panels within local arrangements.

3

CAPACITY

Strengthen multi-agency capability to respond to EFH.

Why? Children are better protected from EFH when the multi-agency teams responsible for safeguarding them have the right people and skills to respond effectively.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Embed and protect specialist expertise in EFH within multi-agency teams.
- B. Collaborate effectively across agencies to respond to EFH.



Evidence-based interventions

4

Offer high-quality mentoring for children at risk of involvement in violence.

Why? Trusting relationships with safe adults can protect children from violence, but mentoring provision is patchy, and many programmes only offer short-term support.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Make mentoring a core part of the safeguarding and wider support offer.
- B. Ensure mentoring is high-quality and relationships are sustained.
- C. Prioritise mentoring for children in care and care leavers.

5

Provide evidence-based parenting and family therapy programmes to improve parenting practices and family functioning, and reduce behavioural difficulties in children.

Why? Evidence-based parenting programmes and family therapy can reduce children's behavioural difficulties, which are linked to later involvement in violence.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Prioritise programmes that have been robustly evaluated.
- B. Match the programme type to children's and families' needs.
- C. Build a flexible support offer and equip practitioners to deliver it effectively.
- D. Monitor take-up, completion and outcomes by demographics and address gaps.

6

Support access to therapy for children who are at risk of involvement in violence.

Why? Psychological therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), can reduce children's involvement in violence.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Jointly commission evidence-based CBT and support children to engage.
- B. Monitor access to mental health support and improve referrals.



Prioritising children in care

7

Proactively safeguard children in care from violence.

Why? Care-experienced children face increased risks of exploitation, instability and criminal justice contact and are less likely to receive a safeguarding response.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- A. Provide stable placements that protect children from EFH.
- B. Ensure care plans proactively identify and reduce the risks of EFH.
- C. Provide high-quality training to foster carers and residential staff to support children affected by EFH.
- D. Develop local protocols to reduce criminalisation of children in care and care leavers.