Nottingham City & Nottinghamshire

Safeguarding Children Competence Framework

April 2026- March 2027

This competence framework for safeguarding children has been developed and agreed by the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP) and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP).
It has been agreed for the following purposes:

- As the basis for enabling partner agencies to review and assure the Partnerships that different staff groups are competent to an appropriate level and accessing appropriate training to support this. This will be reviewed and monitored through the City and County Learning & Workforce Development Group annually.
- As the basis for the criteria used to quality assure safeguarding training delivered by organisations and agencies in the City and County.
- To inform levels of multi-agency training offered by the Partnerships.

The framework was initially informed by the National Competence Framework for Safeguarding Children (published in 2011 by Bournemouth University), and the Intercollegiate document 'Safeguarding children and young people: roles and competences for health care staff' (published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health).

The framework provides agreed minimum standards regarding competence levels that are applicable to all partner agencies, and it is recognised that staff with specific roles and responsibilities may have additional competence requirements. These will have been identified and agreed within agencies.

Informed by the above documents, the NCSCP / NSCP Competence Framework identifies **FOUR** groupings of staff that should have different levels of safeguarding responsibilities and therefore competences. Whilst the following identifies some staff roles in some agencies that would fit into each grouping as a guide, it is the responsibility of each agency to identify which of their staff fit into which group.

Staff group 1:
Staff (including volunteers) in infrequent contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers who may become aware of possible abuse or neglect. E.g., librarians, GP and hospital receptionists and administrative staff, community advice centre staff, grounds staff, recreation assistants, environmental health officers.

Staff group 2:
Staff (including volunteers) in regular contact or have a period of intense but irregular contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers including those who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment, including those that may arise during the course of a CAF/EHAF. For example: housing, the police other than those in specialist child protection roles, Library assistants and homework officers, sports development officers, disability specialists, faith groups, community youth groups, play scheme volunteers and all health clinical staff, including those who work with adults, not identified as requiring a higher level of training.

Staff group 3:
Staff who work predominantly with children, young people and/or their parents/carers and who could potentially contribute to assessing, planning, intervening, and reviewing the needs of a child and parenting capacity where there are safeguarding concerns. For example, Paediatricians, children's nurses and allied health professionals, GPs including GP practice leads, youth workers, those working in the early years sector (depending on role), residential staff, midwives, school nurses, health visitors, sexual health staff, teachers, probation staff, sports club welfare officers, those working with adults in, for example, learning disability, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse services, youth offending service staff, staff in secure settings and those working in community play schemes.

Staff group 4:
Staff who have specialist safeguarding roles and responsibilities. E.g. named professionals, safeguarding leads, safeguarding board representatives, specialist police officers.

Update to content for 2026/27	**Competence/Knowledge**
	Consider any implications throughout training in relation to Working Together to Safeguard Children. HM Government. December 2023 (updated June 2025) . Also any changes in relation

	to the Families First Partnership Programme locally.	
Staff group	**Competence**	**Evidence which may help to demonstrate competence**
Staff group 1: Staff (including volunteers) in infrequent contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers who may become aware of possible abuse or neglect. E.g. librarians, GP receptionists, community advice centre staff, grounds men, recreation assistants, environmental health officers	Ability to understand and recognise child safeguarding issues	**Can demonstrate:** An understanding of how and why safeguarding children is an essential part of their responsibilities (including basic legal information) An understanding of the nature of child abuse and neglect, including Working Together definitions. Knowledge of signs and indicators of abuse and neglect – linked with Working Together definitions Understanding of bruising in non-mobile babies and significance. i.e. *Babies that don't cruise rarely bruise*
	Knowledge of and ability to respond to concerns about a child	An understanding of the importance of identifying concerns at the earliest stage possible (early intervention and better outcomes for children)

		An understanding of the importance of being child focussed / listening to the child. An understanding of what to do if they have a concern about the welfare of a child – who to talk to, what to record, where and when to do this, and why this is important, including where the concern is about staff members. Knowledge of local points of referral (For Child Protection and Early Help) Confidence in handling disclosures – what to say and do if a child or someone discloses abuse to them An understanding of Confidentiality – what information can be shared / must be shared. What to do if asked to keep a secret. An understanding of issues around consent – what to do if someone doesn't agree that they can talk to someone else

	Ability to understand potential barriers to effective responses and where to get support	Knowledge of sources of support – who can they speak to about this, what support is there for them? An understanding of the importance of collaborative working with others An understanding of the importance of respecting diversity. Being sensitive to and taking difference into account, but not at the risk of harm to a child How they recognise how their own beliefs, values and experience might influence their recognition and response to safeguarding concerns Knowledge of their single agency safeguarding policy
	Understanding when and how, to escalate concerns about a child	An awareness of the escalation process within inter-agency procedures An ability to use within own role to resolve professional differences in opinion in individual case i.e. with whom to talk to escalate concerns and what their role is in the escalation pathway.

Staff group	**Competence (in addition to the above)**	**Evidence which may help to demonstrate competence**
Staff group 2: Staff (including volunteers) in regular contact or have a period of intense but irregular contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers including those who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment, including those that may arise during the course of an assessment. For example: housing, the police other than those in specialist child protection roles, Library assistants and homework officers, sports development officers, disability specialists, faith groups, community youth groups, play scheme volunteers and all health clinical staff, including those who work with adults, not identified as requiring a higher level of training.	More in depth knowledge of factors that relate to understanding and identifying child safeguarding issues	**Can demonstrate:** A basic knowledge of stages of child development – what children of particular ages would be expected to be able to do. An understanding of specific risk factors for vulnerable children including Contextual Safeguarding. For example: disability, race and racism, private fostering, fabricated or induced illness, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation including County Lines, children who go missing, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, gang activity, belief in spirit possession, trafficking, radicalisation, extremism, hate crime & on-line safety. An understanding of how adult risk factors such as the trilogy of risk (domestic abuse, adult mental health and

		adult substance abuse) impact on the welfare of children. Duty to refer adult concerns to adult social care. Knowledge of relevant safeguarding legislation and agency role Knowledge of Safeguarding Partnership web sites and what to find there, including the web based inter-agency safeguarding children procedures and practice guidance. An understanding of key messages from learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and other reviews (Relevant to target group)
	Ability to contribute to the assessment and management of risk of child safeguarding concerns	Knowledge and use of local approaches to early intervention. Family Support Strategy / Pathway (City) and Pathway to Provision (County), including information on the Assessment Triangle, needs of the child/family & Levels of Support. Ability to contribute to an assessment – either by supporting or identifying a lead professional and use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in the **City** and / or ability to request a service for

		Early Help Services **(County)** An understanding of the need to promote and encourage the participation of children and families in safeguarding processes An ability to identify appropriate ways of supporting children and young people for whom there are safeguarding concerns **City -** An awareness of Signs of Safety and its use in referral and assessment processes. **County –** An awareness of Strengths Based Practice.
	Ability to understand the importance of own behaviour and boundaries	Knowledge of and adherence to professional and organisational codes of conduct. An understanding of the importance of promoting equality (e.g., both women and men can be perpetrators, issues apply to same sex as well as opposite sex relationships) Knowledge and understanding of how own attitude and behaviour can have an effect on children, young people and families.

		An understanding and awareness of the emotional impact of working with children, young people and families.

Staff group	**Competence (in addition to the above)**	**Evidence which may help to demonstrate competence**
Staff group 3: Staff who work predominantly with children, young people and/or their parents/carers and who could potentially contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and reviewing the needs of a child and parenting capacity where there are safeguarding concerns. For example, Paediatricians, children's nurses and allied health professionals, GPs including GP practice lead, youth workers, those working in the early years sector (depending on role), residential staff, midwives, school nurses, health visitors, sexual health staff, teachers, probation staff, sports club welfare officers, those working with adults in, for example, learning disability, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse services, youth offending service	Ability to work together to meet the needs of children where there are safeguarding concerns, including understanding their own role and the role of others	**Can demonstrate:** How they develop effective working relationships with other professionals An understanding of own and other's role in safeguarding processes How they identify learning from Case Management Reviews An ability to maintain accurate and up to date records
	Ability to contribute to interagency safeguarding	Ability to contribute to an assessment – either by supporting or identifying a lead

staff, staff in secure settings and those working in community play schemes. Managers, such as children's social care team managers would also be included in this level.	assessment, decision making and planning meetings	professional and use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in the **City** and / or ability to request a service for Early Help Services **(County)** An ability to work within child protection case conference processes and core groups An ability to prepare reports for meetings about vulnerable children An ability to critically reflect and analyse evidence about a child and family's circumstances An ability to contribute to and challenge decision making Understanding of the impact of child abuse and neglect on child development
	Ability to engage and challenge families in safeguarding	An ability to effectively engage children and their families in understanding safeguarding concerns and changes required. An ability to recognise and overcome barriers to engagement of children and

		families (e.g. disguised compliance)

Staff group	**Competence (In addition to the above)**	**Evidence which may help to demonstrate competence**
Staff group 4: Staff who have specialist safeguarding roles and responsibilities. E.g. named professionals, safeguarding leads, safeguarding partnership representatives, specialist police officers.	Understanding of the national picture and developments in Safeguarding	**Can demonstrate:** An ability to access sources of information to keep abreast of national developments in safeguarding Attendance at relevant briefings, conferences, training courses.
	Understanding the role of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and expectations on them within the partnership forum	Where appropriate, how they contribute to Safeguarding Partnerships functions/relevant meetings. How they ensure they are aware of learning from Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, Rapid Reviews and Audits and also how they ensure their own organisation takes appropriate action. How they promote multi-agency training

		and other learning opportunities.
	Understanding and ability to contribute to the development and improvement of own organisation safeguarding practice	An ability to handle internal and external Safeguarding Investigations within organisations An ability to quality assure internal Safeguarding Procedures within own organisation An understanding of the expectations around Safeguarding Policies and Procedures within own organisation How staff within own organisation should be trained to deal with Safeguarding Issues. Appropriate training for role. How they manage a team who commonly make safeguarding referrals (including providing professional supervision).