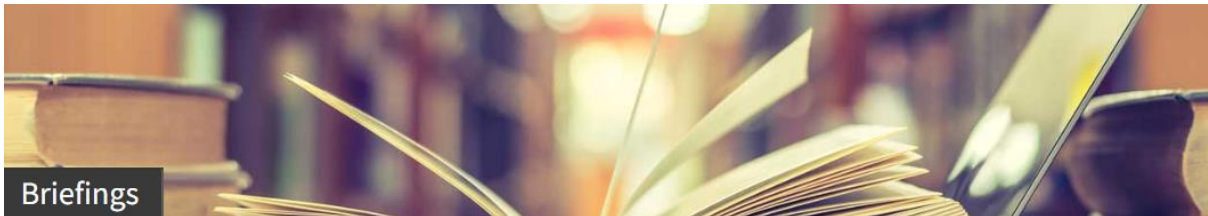




## **Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group - Briefing for staff**

The Pan-Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures Group met on 27 April 2026.

This briefing provides an update on changes made to the [Sussex Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures Resource](#)



### **Delivering Effective Services – How to use Evidence to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families**

This briefing summarises recently updated guidance from the Department for Education Families First Partnership Programme. The guidance emphasises the importance of using evidence-based approaches to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. It explains what the term 'evidence based interventions' means and highlights where local authorities and partner agencies can find resources and information on the most effective ways to support children and families.

### **Children's Social Care National Framework**

This briefing highlights changes to the Children's Social Care National Framework which was updated by the Department for Education in March 2026, with further information being added in May 2026.

The National Framework underpins the vision for reforms to the children's social care system. It sets expectations for practice and should be used by all agencies.



## Revised Guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children and Families First Partnership Programme

This briefing summarises the changes introduced by recent revisions to the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and the Families First Partnership Programme. Please note the following policies have been updated following the recent revisions to statutory guidance:

| <b>Policy</b>  | <b>Revision</b>  |
|--|--|
| <a href="#"><u>Safeguarding Disabled Children</u></a>  | References to 'children with disabilities' were updated to 'disabled children'   |
| <a href="#"><u>Criminal and Sexual Exploitation, including Serious Organised Crime and Gangs</u></a> | Information was added on <a href="#"><u>group-based child sexual exploitation</u></a> ,  |
| <a href="#"><u>Safeguarding Children impacted by Domestic Abuse</u></a>                              | In section 6. on Children and Young People, information has been added on the government's proposal to repeal the presumption of parental involvement in the Children Act 1989. Additional information was added into sections 1. Definition and 6. Impact on Children and Young People in line with revised <a href="#"><u>Working Together to Safeguard Children</u></a> . New section 1.6 Controlling and coercive behaviour was added. |
| <a href="#"><u>Chairing Child Protection Conferences – Guiding Principles</u></a>                    | This chapter was updated in line with revised <a href="#"><u>Working Together to Safeguard Children</u></a> .  |
| <a href="#"><u>Information Communication Technology</u></a>  | Additional information was added in relation to risks and specific offences under the Online Safety Act 2023. Information was added into section 2. Unlawful Material on specific offences, and into section 5. Use of the Internet on children being exposed to online threats and harmful online 'fake news' and children being exposed to content designed to cause them physical and / or psychological harm.                          |
| <a href="#"><u>Honour Based Abuse</u></a>  | Information was added into section 1. Introduction in line with revised <a href="#"><u>Working Together to Safeguard Children</u></a> .  |

Further changes made to pan Sussex safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures as a result of revisions to statutory guidance will be published in July's briefing.



## **Other changes made in April 2026:**

### **Dangerous Dogs**

The Surrey / Sussex Police Dog Unit reviewed this policy and updates were made throughout, including; more information on prohibited dog types, temporary housing for exempted dogs, court powers, and general safeguarding principles. **All dog bites must be reported to the police via 101.**



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### **Known Offenders and Others who May Pose a Risk to Children**

Information has been added into section 2.3 Prisoners' contact with children in relation to High Secure Psychiatric Hospitals. Please see also [Visits by a Child to High Secure Hospitals](#) additional information was added into section 2.1 Report. Also new sections 2.2 Nature and scope of the local authority assessment and 2.3 Timeliness and prioritisation have been added.

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### **Children who Harm Other Children & Understanding Sexual Behaviour in Children**

These policies have been reviewed by a working group of relevant professionals across the county. It is important to consider that the child who harmed may pose a risk of harm to other children. They may have considerable needs themselves and may also be or have been the victim of abuse. The interests of any such children must also be considered as part of the response to the referral and in the multi-agency management of the case.

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### **Sussex Police Protocol Allegations of Child Abuse against a Police Officer or Police Staff Member**



This protocol ensures that allegations against any member of Sussex Police, including police officers, Special Constables, police staff, volunteers, and contractors, are handled promptly and transparently in line with statutory guidance. Clarification has been added that misconduct investigations run in parallel with criminal investigations. Severity assessments are conducted on a face-value basis, applying the balance of probabilities to the allegations made and considering the seriousness of those allegations if proven.

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### **Abuse Linked to Spiritual and Religious Beliefs / Ritual Abuse**

The term belief in spirit possession refers to the belief that an evil force has entered and is controlling a child. The term 'witch' may also be used to describe a belief that



a child can use evil forces to harm others. Related terms can include black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah, demons, and child sorcerers.

In such cases, families, carers, religious leaders, congregations, and the children themselves may genuinely believe that evil forces are at work. Any concerns about a child arising in this context must therefore be treated seriously. Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 empowers local authorities to investigate where a child may have suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm. Although the Act does not specifically refer to witchcraft or spirit possession, it defines child abuse in a way that can include harm linked to such beliefs or practices. Where concerns relate to multiple children, consideration should be given to implementing the procedures set out in [Complex \(Organised and Multiple\) Abuse](#) .

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