

## Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

# Safeguarding Children Competency Framework

## Minimum Requirements for Safeguarding Children Learning

This document is a revision of the previous Framework (January 2022). It is based on current guidance, definitions and terminology and is subject to change.

This document will be reviewed on a regular basis to consider and reflect any changes in legislation, guidance, definition, terminology, and practice.

## January 2026

# The Competency Framework

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## 1. Introduction

This Safeguarding Children Competency Framework is for use by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Children’s Workforce to support individuals and organisations to undertake their safeguarding roles and responsibilities in a **confident** and **competent** manner.

There is an expectation that organisations will ensure that all staff providing a service know how to respond to concerns in line with local and national agendas. Some individuals will work in settings which provide services across different tiers of the [Thresholds for access to services](#): Tier 1 - Universal services; Tier 2 - Early Help Services, Targeted Services; and Tier 4 Specialist Services. **It is the responsibility of the organisation to determine the knowledge and learning that is required.**

This Competency Framework is for use by everyone who works or volunteers with children, young people and their families, or who is responsible for improving their outcomes.

*“Nothing is more important than children’s welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other’s roles and responsibilities, and how they work together”*  
(p8, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026)

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This includes:

- Adult Workforce Practitioners who may be in a position to contribute to assessments of parenting capacity
- Staff that support a whole family approach
- Other individuals, who offer a service within the community i.e. housing maintenance staff, receptionists of community centres etc.

However, the content of learning opportunities should be **proportionate** to the individual's roles and responsibilities, in order that it is relevant and meaningful. For example, in terms of child development for someone in a housing role, this could be to understand that a child of 8 would normally be in school and not at home during a weekday.

NB: There is a separate Safeguarding Adults Competency Framework that you may also need to use within your organisation.

## EXCEPTIONS

If your organisation already has an existing mandatory Safeguarding Framework; for example, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Safeguarding Children and Young People: Roles and Competences for Health Care Staff', the training will meet the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) if it is generally aligned with this framework. Therefore, in this situation it is not necessary to complete this framework in addition to your agency standards.

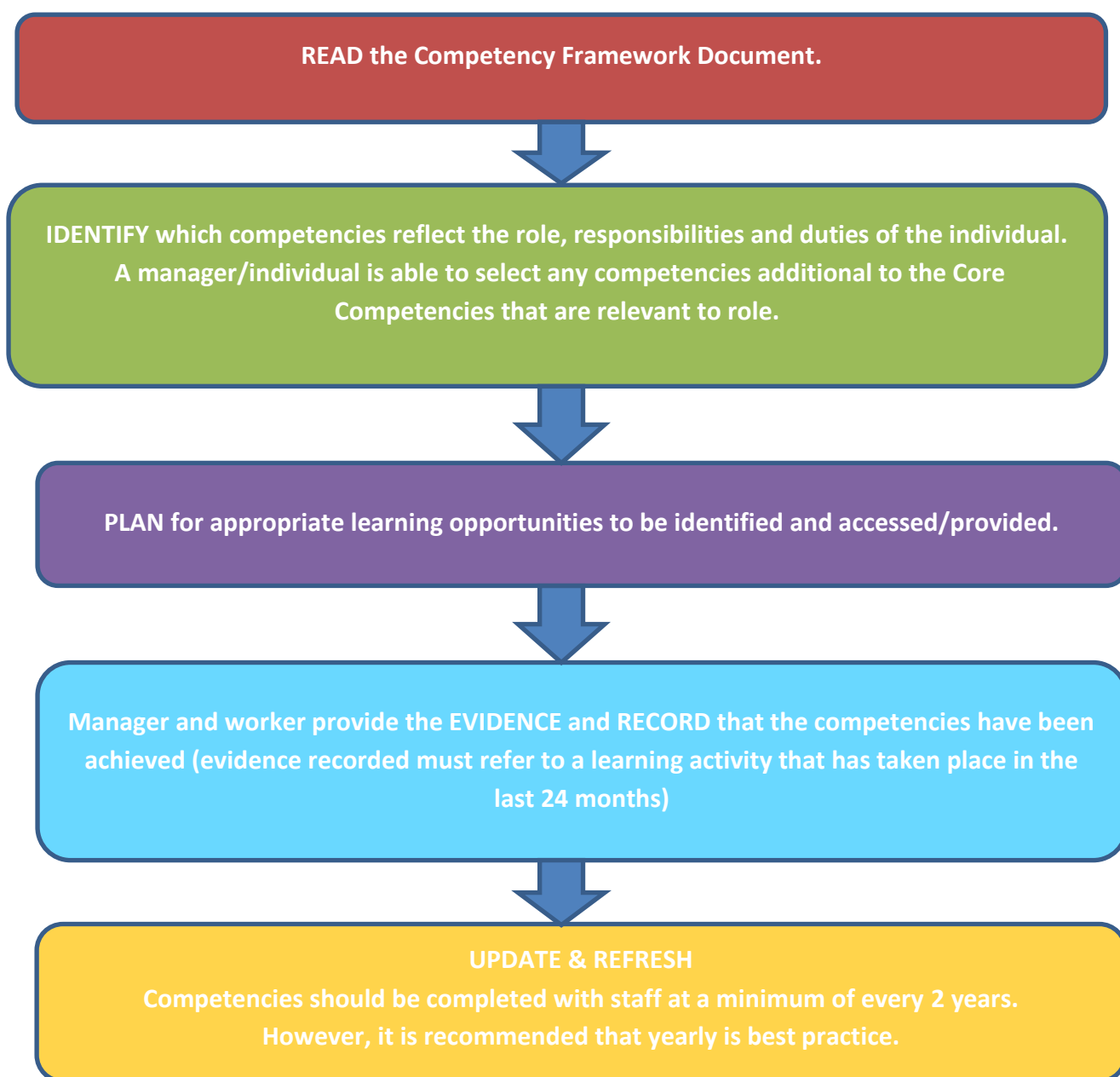
However, if your organisation does not have a Safeguarding Framework in place, meeting the competencies would support an environment to meet the safeguarding expectations of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

**This Competency Framework provides the minimum standards expected by the Safeguarding Children Partnerships of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.**

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## 2. The Process

- This document covers a range of competencies which will reflect the variety of roles and responsibilities held by workers and volunteers within the children’s workforce.
- Everyone regardless of job role must demonstrate competency in the Core Competencies which are those numbered 1-5.
- Those working with children will need to complete Competencies 1-10.
- Depending on an individual’s role and responsibility, further competencies may need to be achieved and evidenced.
- It is the responsibility of the organisation/individual to determine the knowledge and learning that is required.



# The Competency Framework

## 3. Context

This Competency Framework document:

- Provides some guidance regarding how to identify the appropriate competencies for roles by suggesting groups within the Children's Workforce.
- Outlines the minimum competency for staff and volunteers within each group.
- Provides suggestions regarding a range of training, learning and development methods and opportunities through which the competencies might be achieved.
- Suggests a format for recording this evidence.
- Suggests that the evidence is reviewed yearly to support development of workers as part of an established framework such as an 'Annual Review'.

This competency framework has been prepared following consultation with the partner agencies within the Children's Workforce of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and the Multi-Agency Learning and Development Group (MALDG). It is in accordance with [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures](#), relevant legislation and the Knowledge and Skills Statements for Social Work.

This Competency Framework has been prepared in accordance with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023 and also reflects national guidance, research and local priorities.

**Everyone who has contact with children, must meet the Core Competencies 1-5.**

**Anyone working or volunteering within the children's workforce must demonstrate Competencies 1-10**

The content of learning opportunities should be **proportionate** to the individual's roles and responsibilities, in order that it is relevant and meaningful.

# The Competency Framework

## 4. Essential Information

This competency framework acknowledges that in addition to traditional training events, there are different ways of learning and developing. Whilst training activities help to provide the knowledge and skills that contribute to staff being able to meet their competencies, attending a training course does not automatically mean that the competencies will have been met - discussion and verification after the event may be required.

Different recognised activities that could contribute to meeting the competencies include:

- Taught courses, conferences and briefings (single agency, multi-agency, joint courses – in house or external provider)
- Practice based workshops (single, joint and multi-agency)
- E-Learning / workbooks
- Personal research such as reading and using articles
- Self-directed learning and distance learning
- Mentoring and shadowing
- Reflective supervision
- Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults briefings
- Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) including Rapid Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR) which replace Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)
- Formal education / Qualification pathway
- Peer reviews, case conferences
- Learning / knowledge from previous qualifications

**NB:** With regard to training, multiagency learning in a classroom environment with peers is preferred, rather than learning alone. Training opportunities should be high quality and quality assured and, where possible, be produced and delivered in line with local policies and language.

## Evidencing and Recording the Competency Requirements

It is the responsibility of organisations to:

- Identify which competencies their staff/volunteers need to meet
- Recognise and consider different learning activities, in addition to traditional training events and ensure that these development opportunities are accessible, which includes allowing the individual the time to attend a training course or other learning
- Identify on-going developmental needs
- Identify and use a system to record learning and then evidence that the minimum competency has been achieved – this must be based on learning activities that have taken place within the previous 24 months.

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NB: there is a template provided to record that competencies have been met – but any system that is clear on what has been evidenced, when, and how would be appropriate.

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are given learning, training and development opportunities within the appropriate timescales to enable individuals to meet their minimum requirements over a 2-year period.
- Maintain records to evidence learning.

**It is important that the opportunity to reflect on learning is also provided and recorded, to ensure the competencies were fully met.**

These competencies can be assessed in a number of ways, often using mechanisms that are already in place to assess the level of skill and knowledge in staff members and volunteers. The following methods could be used to assess competency:

A manager could assess through:

- Induction programme
- Probationary period
- Direct observation
- Supervisions / one-to-ones
- Annual reviews such as Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) / appraisals
- Discussion, formal or informal
- Questioning, individually or in staff meetings
- File audits
- Completion of an e-learning assessment module

A Trainer or Assessor could assess through:

- Direct observation as part of a qualification
- Coursework and assignments as part of a qualification

A practitioner could assess through:

- Peer audits

Here are some examples of how the above could be used effectively to meet the competencies.

## Example 1

Following any training session including induction the manager/supervisor can check with the individual that they have understood messages around safeguarding that are shared. This can be for example realising the importance of a signing in/out process.

## Example 2

During a team meeting recent information could be shared about a local review and the team could discuss: what they would do in that situation; where there should have been different steps taken; how the Safeguarding Procedure would be used; the impact on the child; and the impact on any workers involved.

This same process could be used in a one-to-one setting such as an appraisal to check out safeguarding knowledge.

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## Example 3

As part of an individual's development, they might attend a meeting to shadow a colleague. Following this a conversation could take place to see what the person had learned and where this might impact on their safeguarding practice.

## Example 4

When there has been a situation or incident in the workplace, this could be debriefed either in a group or individually whatever is more appropriate and any learning about what should be done differently noted. Also, it might be that the Safeguarding Procedure needs to be changed and honest appropriate conversations with the team about this is an excellent way to build a safe workplace culture.

**All of the above could then be logged in the individual's safeguarding folder/competency log.**

There are competency log proformas provided that also provide suggestions of evidence that can be used to demonstrate the competency of staff members and volunteers. The decision about how to assess should be made by individual agencies, in a way that is appropriate and relevant for their workforce and their service users, as well as meeting any statutory and regulatory requirements.

It is recommended that assessments of competency take place as early as possible for all new starters – this will ensure that any development needs are identified as soon as possible, to reduce the risk of children, young people and families experiencing abuse or harm. These assessments of competency could be formal or informal, and could include discussion, questions at interview or observations of practice.

## Timescale for refresher/update training:

It is recommended that training/learning is attended every two years (minimum), and, best practice would be for this to be multi-agency training. As well as meeting the competencies within the Framework, attending multi-agency training will support with learning, networking and will allow organisations to better understand the roles of partner agencies. This particularly applies to those who carry out safeguarding assessments and investigations.

## Requirements and responsibilities relating to all competencies:

The employing agency/organisation has the responsibility for:

- Ensuring and evidencing that staff meet the required competencies and the Core Values (below).
- The organisation, delivery and recording of learning undertaken.
- Ensuring that any Safeguarding Children learning reflects the Core Values.

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- Ensuring that any training is of high quality which has been quality assured and, where possible, has been produced and delivered in line with local policies and language.

The Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships have the responsibility for:

- Ensuring that partner agencies and organisations monitor, and quality assure the training / learning provided to enable staff to have the opportunity to meet the minimum requirements.
- Seeking assurance from employing agencies/organisations that the training/learning has been effective

### 5. Core Values

The Safeguarding Children Competency Framework is underpinned by two Core Values that all staff and volunteers and safeguarding trainers should demonstrate throughout their evidence in meeting the competencies:

- **Place the child at the centre**, considering the daily 'lived' experience of the child or young person, listening to their voice, working out what they are trying to communicate and never losing sight of their needs.
- **Create and support an ethos** that values working collaboratively with others (valuing different roles, knowledge and skills), respects diversity (including culture, race, religion and disability), promotes equality and encourages the participation of children and families in the safeguarding processes.

### 6. The Safeguarding Children Competency Framework

The competencies are set out below. All staff who have contact with children, must complete competencies 1-5 which are the Core Competencies. If staff volunteer or work within the children's workforce, they must complete competencies 1-10. Some staff must then complete additional competencies to reflect their role and responsibilities.

Managers and staff/volunteers are able to add to their competencies from the list if they believe this to be relevant. There are also spaces on the suggested template to add additional competencies should this be relevant. For example, in a specialist role around supporting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children there may be other 'competencies' potentially around the law that could be added. However, this is not an expectation of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships, merely a suggestion.

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## List of all Competencies

### Core Competencies for any role

1. Understand what is meant by the term safeguarding including knowing the categories of abuse and neglect.
2. Know how to recognise possible signs and indicators of abuse and neglect.
3. Know what to do with important information; how it should be recorded, how it should be shared safely and with whom it should be shared. This should be outlined in your agency's safeguarding policy and procedure. Give consideration that information gained will need to be shared if a referral is made and could be used in a legal capacity.
4. Understand the importance of sharing information and what could act as a barrier to doing this. There should be no barriers to sharing information in relation to safeguarding – please see this [Information Sharing](#) advice.
5. Be persistent in your response to safeguarding needs, notice, check and share and apply professional curiosity. Follow up with enquiries, escalate where necessary and 'whistle blow' as required.

### Additional Competencies for those working/volunteering with children

6. Know how to work in ways that safeguard children from abuse, harm and neglect including knowing how to respond and communicate with children, young people or adults when they may be trying to tell you something. This could be verbally, non-verbally or through their behaviour
7. Understand what might make some children more vulnerable taking into account diversity and difference and promoting equality and inclusion.
8. Have knowledge of safeguarding legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance, as well as other 'Safeguarding' bodies/agencies appropriate to role (such as the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP))
9. Understanding and awareness of the ages and stages of child development, including those children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) to identify and acknowledge changes in behaviour as a possible indicator of abuse.
10. Understand that safeguarding requires working effectively across teams, different agencies and professions, as well as with children, young people and families themselves.

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## Additional Competencies according to role

11. Understand how to make a referral and what to do if your referral is not accepted. This includes having knowledge of the 'Thresholds for access to services' and how to escalate concerns.
12. Know how to lead and/or contribute to assessments of children, young people and/or parents/carers.
13. Ability to assess risk, need, and to follow procedures/pathways to engage with appropriate services. This might include the ability to use professional judgement to make decisions as to whether a child or young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.
14. Develop and implement effective safeguarding policies and procedures for the organisation to support the creation of a safe organisational culture.
15. Understand how social media can impact children and staff in your organisation including having appropriate policies to support internet safety.
16. Understand how to ensure safe recruitment following any guidance relevant to role, including knowing how to manage and monitor allegations of abuse against staff.
17. Ensure that staff have appropriate understanding, knowledge and skills in relation to safeguarding and child protection according to their role and can act and escalate any concerns.
18. Participate effectively in all relevant statutory multi-agency meetings such as Strategy Meetings, Core Groups etc. It may be that your role is one where you have seen the child more recently or regularly than other professionals and so have confidence in your contribution.
19. Ability to give effective feedback and offer professional challenge to colleagues across agencies, or those you are advising. This might include the management of conflict and disagreement between professionals within and across services/agencies and confidence to appropriately challenge and escalate where necessary.
20. Lead and promote reflective supervision both individual and in groups. Ensure routine appraisal of staff.
21. Understanding of leadership and management in safeguarding and child protection services.
22. Ability to look holistically at children, families and their communities considering: the child's developmental needs; parenting capacity; and family and environmental factors.
23. Recognising the role of other agencies and their limitations as well as your own.
24. Ability to work with children and families where there are safeguarding, or child protection concerns as part of a multiagency and/or multidisciplinary team when assessing a child.
25. Ability to complete reports and present safeguarding/child protection concerns verbally and in writing for professional and legal purposes as required.
26. Supports contributions to Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) and other multiagency reviews and audits. Co-ordinate any action plans arising from these as appropriate to your role.
27. Ensure plans and targets for safeguarding children are embedded at a strategic level across the organisation.
28. Promote awareness of safeguarding children within and outside their organisation.
29. Develop and maintain systems to ensure the inclusion of children and families in the evaluation and development of service provision.
30. Understand the role and function of the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

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