



**The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith
Minister for Skills**

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The Lord Storey CBE

By email

7 January 2026

Dear Mike,

I said I would write to you on the points you raise during the Oral Question on appropriate use of digital technology by pre-school children, which took place on 18 December 2025. In your comments you referenced the awful cases of abuse which occurred in nurseries in Cheadle in 2022 and Twickenham in 2024. As I mentioned, there has been another distressing case in a nursery in Camden, which closed in 2024, on which the Secretary of State recently made a statement.

Whenever a serious incident occurs involving a child, including in an early years setting, these are reported to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP). This independent panel then makes a decision whether to conduct a national review of the incident, to identify potential learning and any changes which can be enacted to keep children as safe as possible.

Keeping children safe in early years settings is of the utmost importance, for this reason we continually monitor and review safeguarding requirements for early years settings. This includes reviewing lessons learned from incidents and any reviews conducted by the CSPRP. Ofsted inspect early years settings and respond to any complaints and safeguarding concerns raised by whistleblowers, parents and others.

The government has taken a number of steps in 2025 to improve the safeguarding practices of early years settings. In September we introduced a number of new safeguarding requirements and changes to existing requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. These include enhanced recruitment practices to further prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, and new whistleblowing requirements to help ensure that all early years educators understand how to escalate any safeguarding concerns.

In addition, we are actively working on improving safeguarding awareness within early years settings through producing an online safeguarding training package for early years educators. This training is being produced in collaboration with NSPCC and will cover the criteria set out in sections 1 and 2 of the safeguarding training annex of the EYFS which is mandatory for all early years educators.

Digital devices and CCTV

These awful cases have raised questions regarding CCTV and digital device usage in settings. As I noted, the Secretary of State has announced that the Government will appoint an expert panel to inform guidance for the sector on the effective and safe use of CCTV and digital devices. The guidance will consider the question of whether CCTV ought to be mandated, and will set out best practice, technical information and clear expectations on devices and CCTV.

Sadly, past incidents have shown that the presence of CCTV has not prevented harm. There will be differing views among parents and carers regarding CCTV use in settings, some may see benefits while others may have concerns about their children being recorded and the security of such footage. We know that some settings use CCTV, and it is crucial that where it is used, CCTV is always a part of a broader focus on improving safeguarding awareness, training and practice, because it's getting that positive safeguarding culture right which will have the biggest impact for children.

Settings are already required to have policies on how digital devices are used. They can help communicate with parents and carers, play a role in curriculum planning and proportionate ongoing assessment, and staff training and support. The panel will consider effective management of risks, and questions regarding the oversight of digital devices in settings, including cyber security where settings do hold footage of children. This will also capture learning following the cyber attack faced by Kido nursery chain earlier this year.

Ofsted inspections

We also want to drive higher standards through a strengthened improvement and accountability system, so we have made changes to Ofsted inspections that will help providers to improve the quality of their provision and give parents greater confidence in the quality of early years settings. From November Ofsted began inspecting settings on the Early Years Register under the revised Education Inspection Framework. Ofsted report cards provide much greater transparency, granularity and insight, giving parents, carers they need to make decisions around their child's care, and education professionals the information they need to drive improvement across the education system.

From April 2026, Ofsted will inspect new early years providers within 18 months of opening and move towards inspecting all providers at least once every four years, compared with six years previously. In addition, we are working with Ofsted to introduce reporting on larger nursery chains, so that issues that span a group of providers can be addressed.

Child Protection Authority

We have also recently published our consultation on the Child Protection Authority (CPA). The CPA will be a keystone of the government's Opportunity and Safer Streets missions and will have powers to hold organisations and local partnerships to account for implementing recommendations from reviews and inspections where failings have persisted.

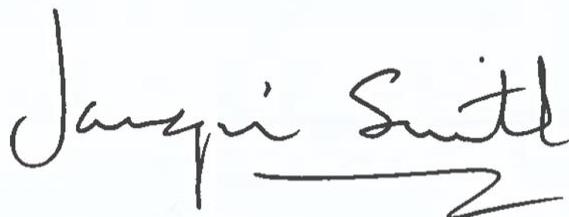
We are consulting on a CPA with three core sets of functions: it will provide national oversight and system leadership; promote and embed good practice; and drive improvement and accountability. The CPA will fill critical gaps in national leadership alongside local learning and accountability, helping to ensure that every child is better protected from harm.

We are not proposing that the CPA has inspection functions so as not to duplicate the role of existing inspectorates and to promote transparency and effective learning. The consultation does propose that the CPA has powers to convene organisations, compel information and drive improvements where serious failings are identified. We would welcome views from across sectors, organisations and members of the public to help inform our plans.

The CPA consultation is now published, open until March 2026, and the Government will publish its formal response by the summer.

I hope this provides reassurance that this government is treating the concerns raised from these cases with the seriousness they deserve. These incidents should never have happened, and we are committed to further strengthen the ways in which we keep our youngest and most vulnerable children safe. I will deposit a copy of this letter in the House Library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacqui Smith", with a horizontal line underneath it.

The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith
Minister for Skills