



Keeping children safe in Bolton

Newsletter

June 2026 Issue 15

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership



"See it, Say it, Safeguard it."

Welcome to our latest newsletter, where we highlight key developments and priorities in safeguarding and family support across Bolton. In this edition, we explore our renewed focus on **tackling child neglect** through the Bolton Strategy and shaping the **Family First Partnership reforms**. We also spotlight the importance of **Family Group Decision Making** and ensuring the **voices of children** and babies remain at the heart of all we do.

With warmer months ahead, we share vital **water safety** messages, alongside an introduction to the **new LADO**. Finally, discover our upcoming courses, workshops, and webinars designed to support your continued learning and practice. News articles and ideas please to multiagencytraining@bolton.gov.uk

Content

- Call to Action “Child Neglect” – Bolton Strategy
- Family First Partnership Reforms
- Family Group Decision Making
- Child’s / Baby’s Voice
- Water Safety
- Effective Plans at conference
- LADO – New Face
- Courses- Workshops -Webinars

Respond, Nurture, Thrive

Bolton's Multi-agency Neglect Strategy

Our Vision

In Bolton, we want every child to have the best possible start in life, safe, supported, and able to thrive.

We will prevent and reduce neglect through early, coordinated, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive support.



Our Shared Commitment



- Embed the strategic principles across organisations with full involvement of system leaders.
- Mobilise Bolton's shared definition of neglect, common tools, and pathways.
- Prioritise early identification and family help: Embedding a trauma-informed approach.

What Success Looks Like



Fewer children require Child Protection Plans for neglect.

- More families receive help earlier, reducing escalation.
- Practitioners feel confident, skilled, and supported; Children and families feel heard, respected, and safer.

Governance & Accountability



Delegated Safeguarding Partners
Strategic Oversight & 6-Monthly Reviews



Safeguarding Effectiveness Group
Monitor Progress & Drive Improvement

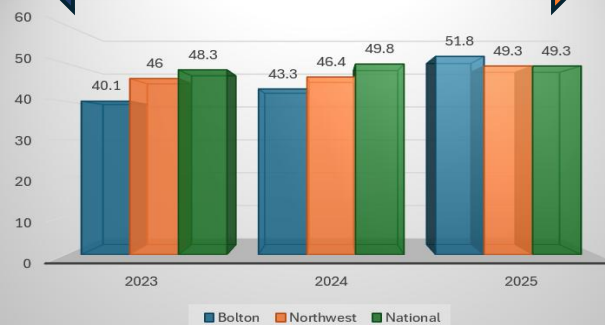
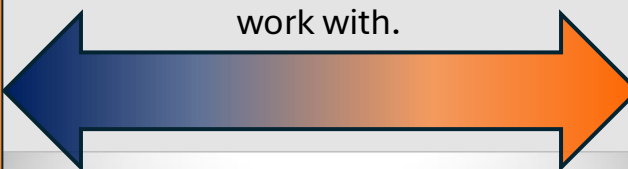


Independent Scrutineer
Robust Challenge & Annual Review

Child Neglect

Bolton Strategic Overview Call to Action: Strengthening Our Response to Child Neglect in Bolton.

Tackling neglect is everyone's business. In six months BSCP will be seeking assurance from all statutory and relevant organisations as to how they have embedded Bolton's Tackling Neglect Strategy and supporting resources, and what impact has it made for the children and families they work with.



The percentage of Child Protection Plans (CPPs) in Bolton with neglect as the primary category of harm increased from 40.1% in 2023 to 51.8% in 2025, overtaking both the northwest average and national average (49%).

Alignment with Bolton's Vision 2040

Bolton's Vision 2040 sets out an ambitious plan for a borough where every child has the best start in life, families thrive, communities are safe, and the local economy grows sustainably. "Respond, Nurture, Thrive" (2025–2028) directly supports these aspirations through its whole-system, prevention-focused approach.



Supporting Family-Friendly Communities

Vision 2040 prioritises strong families and early intervention to reduce inequalities and improve life chances. This strategy aligns by embedding: –

- ✓ Primary Prevention measures such as universal awareness campaigns, Family Hubs, and parenting programmes to create safe and thriving communities
- ✓ Support that strengthens protective factors and reduces stressors that often lead to neglect.
- ✓ Approaches that promote resilience and linking families to practical resources, contributing to inclusive, supportive communities.



Enabling Every Child to Achieve Their Potential

Educational attainment and wellbeing are central to Vision 2040. Neglect is a significant barrier to learning and development; therefore, the strategy focuses on:

- ✓ Early identification and timely intervention to prevent escalation
- ✓ Trauma-informed practice to support emotional wellbeing and education
- ✓ Contribute to safer communities and improved public confidence



Building Safer, Stronger Communities

Vision 2040 seeks to create safe neighbourhoods through prevention and partnership. The Neglect Strategy strengthens multi-agency collaboration to: –

- ✓ Supports pathways to education, employment, and skills development
- ✓ Creates a stronger foundation for Bolton's future workforce
- ✓ Enhances the borough's attractiveness for investment.

Embedding the Vision's Strategic Pillars:

The Neglect Strategy reflects Vision 2040's core principles of **Prevent, Invest, Grow**:

PREVENT

INVEST

GROW

Child Neglect – Do you see it?

Neglect is one of the forms of child abuse where there are opportunities to improve identification, make predictions about the likelihood of its continued occurrence and take more effective and **earlier interventions** to reduce the impact on a child. Look around this guide and download [A quick reference poster / guide for practitioners](#)

Recognising different types of child neglect

Physical neglect



Failure to meet a child's basic physical needs.

- Poor hygiene, dirty or inappropriate clothing, persistent nappy rash
- Underweight or always hungry
- Lack of essential items such as bedding or heating

Environmental neglect



Unsafe, unhygienic, or harmful living conditions.

- Serious hoarding or clutter
- Vermin infestations, no safe food storage
- Broken or unsafe appliances

Emotional neglect



Failure to provide emotional warmth, stability, or responsiveness.

- Child withdrawn, anxious, overly compliant
- Harsh, unpredictable or unavailable parenting
- Child taking on adult roles (parentification)

Educational neglect



Failure to ensure educational needs, including SEND, are met.

- Lack of support for child's attendance at their registered school
- Inadequate, inappropriate or unstimulating home education provision
- Lack of support for child's educational progress or SEND provision

Medical neglect



Failure to seek medical treatment or follow advice.

- Missed medical appointments
- Medication not collected or treatment plans not followed
- Untreated injuries or medical conditions

Supervisory neglect



Lack of supervision or exposure to unsafe situations.

- Young children left alone or with unsafe caregivers
- Inadequate sleep routines, absence of boundaries
- Adolescents frequently unsupervised late at night

Red flags for identifying neglect



- Repeated short interventions with no sustained change
- Multiple agencies providing food and clothes (compensatory care)
- Parents repeatedly declining support
- Child not seen alone, barriers to the child's environment being seen
- Concerns recorded as isolated incidents but build up over time

Frequently missed forms of neglect



- Dental neglect: untreated pain, decay, missed check-ups
- Mental health neglect: missed appointments, distress not explored, self-harm indicators
- Sleep neglect: unsafe or inconsistent sleeping arrangements, particularly for babies
- Disability or SEN neglect: missed therapy, lack of communication support, specialist equipment not used or maintained

What practitioners should do



- ✓ Name neglect explicitly in records and discussions
- ✓ See the child - in person and alone where appropriate
- ✓ Observe the home environment
- ✓ Use multi-agency chronologies
- ✓ Proactively share information, especially around compensatory care
- ✓ Consider cultural and disability contexts
- ✓ Be mindful of the difference between poverty and neglect
- ✓ Use structured assessment tools

Child Neglect: What are you ‘professionally curious’ about?

Here are some scenarios and questions to think through on your own or even better pull apart as a team.

Professional Curiosity

1. What Information do you need? 2. Who else may hold information? 3. What assumptions are you making?

Scenario 1

A family has been known to services for concerns about home conditions and inconsistent school attendance. Recently, improvements have been noted during arranged visits, the home appears clean, food is available, and the children are well-presented. Parents are friendly, agreeable, and attend meetings, often offering explanations and reassurance that things are now better. However, there are ongoing reports from school that the children sometimes arrive dirty, tired, and without lunch, and progress on agreed actions seems short-lived between visits.



Scenario 2

A 7-year-old child has recently become withdrawn and quiet in class. They often complain of stomach aches and ask to go home early. Lunchbox is frequently empty or contains very little food. The child has mentioned looking after a younger sibling at night while the parent “sleeps a lot.” The family has had recent contact with the school regarding missed homework and reduced parent engagement.



Scenario 3

A 14-year-old young person has irregular school attendance and is frequently late. They often appear tired and disengaged in lessons. Staff are aware they stay up late gaming and using social media. The young person reports that they are “mostly left to themselves” at home and often prepares their own meals. There are concerns they are communicating online with unknown individuals and may be accessing inappropriate content. Parents have said they “trust them to manage themselves” and feel the young person is old enough to be independent.



Use the QR codes to reflect on your responses

Families First Partnership Reforms

The Families First Partnership (FFP) is a national programme launched by the Department for Education to support local safeguarding partners in delivering key reforms to children's social care. It aims to create a more joined-up, family focused system that provides the right help at the right time keeping children safe and strengthening families.

What Is FFP?

It is part of the wider **Stable Homes, Built on Love reform strategy**. It supports local areas to implement 3 major changes:

- A system of **Family Help** that brings together early help and statutory support.
- **Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs)** to improve how professionals respond to significant harm.
- **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)** to empower families to find their own solutions before formal proceedings.

The programme is underpinned by principles of co-production, early intervention and multiagency collaboration.

Strong Foundations

Our system is already built on strong, inclusive, trauma informed and relational foundations:

- Family Hubs
- Team Around the Family
- Team Around the School
- Focus on Inclusion and Trauma-Informed Approach
- Systemic and Relational Practice Family Group Conferencing Strong, effective multiagency partnerships

These foundations give us the credibility, relationships, and tools to build a truly integrated approach across the system. We are growing a culture of reflection and learning and continuing to design with families through coproduction.

Family Help

Family Help **replaces** the traditional divide between early help and Child in Need services. It features:

Multi-disciplinary teams with professionals from the local authority, health, police, education, and community groups.

A Family Help Lead Practitioner who coordinates support and builds trusted relationships with families.

A single assessment and plan, reducing duplication and making it easier for families to navigate services.

The goal is to intervene earlier, reduce escalation, and provide practical, relational support that builds on family strengths.

Multiagency Child Protection

Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) enable faster, more coordinated responses.

These teams:

- Include professionals from social care, police, health and education.
- Share responsibility for decision-making and planning.
- Focus on timely, proportionate responses to risk, with clear thresholds and accountability.

This model aims to reduce delays, improve info sharing and ensure that children at risk receive coordinated, effective protection. It builds on our strong local partnerships.

Family Group Decision Making

Family Group Decision Making, also known as empowers families to develop their own plans and solutions.

It involves:

- **Offering families**, the opportunity to meet and develop their own plan to keep children safe and well. (**Family Network Meeting FNM**)
- Facilitated meetings that include extended family and close friends. (**Family Group Conference FGC**)
- A focus on early, proactive and family collaborative solutions.

Families often know best how to support their children and should be empowered to take the lead wherever possible.

What Next...

Bolton is currently testing its Family Help approach in one local area before scaling up, ready for full implementation by March 2027. Family Group Decision Making is in place and evolving in Bolton. Work is underway to develop a single assessment approach and to implement the new Multi-agency Child Protection arrangements outlined in the reforms.

What we need from you...

Stay aligned with local changes: regularly check for partnership briefings,
Know and use the local offer: keep up to date with available support and how to access them.
Work and reflect collaboratively: engage in multi-agency forums and feed back what's working/not working to help shape implementation.

“Family Group Decision Making” is happening in Bolton!

Under the new **Family Group Decision Making** approach, both **Family Network Meetings (FNMs)** and **Family Group Conferences (FGCs)** bring families together to plan safe care for children, but they differ in structure and purpose.

Family Network Meetings are usually earlier, more flexible, quickly arranged and can be a quick win for practitioners. They help identify strengths within the wider family and explore who can offer support before concerns escalate.

Family Group Conferences are more structured and planned. They are independently facilitated meetings where the wider family develops a clear plan to keep the child safe. Families are given private time to agree their plan, which professionals then review.

Why we use them: both approaches place families at the centre of decision-making, strengthen natural support networks, reduce the need for statutory intervention where possible, and lead to more sustainable, child-focused plans.



Family Network Meeting (FNM)

Family Group Conference (FGC)



Play Video or QR Code



For all queries contact fcg@bolton.gov.uk

How is an FGC different from other meetings?

FGC meetings are based on the belief that, with the right support, families can create safe and meaningful plans to improve their situation.

FGCs are family-led, meaning you make the decisions, your wider family and friends are involved, your child can take an active role if they choose, and private family time is always included to create your plan.

How does an FGC work?

Before a Family Group Conference takes place, an FGC co-ordinator will work with your family to decide who should be invited and when and where the meeting will happen.

They help invited family and friends to support the child or young person to take an active role in the FGC.

An FGC co-ordinator is independent.

This means they will not have worked with you before or made decisions for your family.

What is a Family Group Conference?

A Family Group Conference is a family-led meeting that brings together the family and people important to the child to address concerns raised by professionals or when the family asks for help.



Hi, I'm your family group conference co-ordinator



There are three stages to a Family Group Conference.

Step 1 Information giving

The referrer will explain their concerns about the child or young person and the support available to your family, and your family will have time to ask questions.

Step 2 Private family time

Once your family has the information needed, professionals will leave the room so you can use private family time to decide who will do what, what support is needed, and how you will check the plan is working.

Step 3 Agreeing the plan

Your completed plan will be shared with the FGC co-ordinator and referrer and will be accepted unless it puts your child at risk or does not address the original concerns.

Family Group Conference

from
Bolton Council



The Child's 'Voice'



Missed it?
use QR code*

Just Join the Dots

The NSPCC are campaigning for us to **Listen Up and Speak Up** to help children we are worried about.

There are many ways you can help us:

- **Share this resource** with your colleagues
- **Sign up to our newsletter** to receive updates on our work
- **Follow us on social media** to stay up to date on our work
- **Donate to NSPCC** to help us do our work

Last month we were asking you to “Just Join the Dots”

“Listen Up and Speak Up” to help children we are worried about

- There'll be times when children need advice or support
- There'll also be times when you need to talk or explain something that might upset them.

How do we have those difficult conversations about abuse?

“The Voice of the Child”

1. Pay attention to all the different ways a child may be trying to communicate
2. Ask other professionals for their knowledge of the child
3. Identify and speak to those closest to the child
4. Challenge barriers to seeing the child alone and hearing their voice
5. Empower children to make sure their voice is heard
6. Understand the child's identity and background and check your own biases and preconceptions
7. Provide children with the tools they need to communicate effectively
8. Build trusted relationships with children
9. Include the child's voice and your observations in all assessments, arrangements and decisions

Reference. NSPCC

Talking With Children About Difficult Things

Guidance for professionals on abuse & behaviour concerns

When a child wants to disclose or talk about something they have done

- DO**
- ✓ Stay calm and avoid judgement
 - ✓ Create a safe space
 - ✓ Listen with empathy and curiosity
 - ✓ Understand children may feel ashamed or confused
 - ✓ Use age appropriate, simple language
 - ✓ Use open, gentle questions (“Can you tell me more?”)
 - ✓ Record what is shared (use their exact words)
 - ✓ Do not label or accuse – let the safeguarding process assess
- Prioritise the child's safety and dignity**
- ✓ Reassure them “You've done the right thing by telling me.”
 - ✓ Report to your DSL immediately

- DON'T**
- ✗ Promise confidentiality (“I need to tell someone to keep you safe.”)
 - ✗ Show Shock or disbelief
 - ✗ Ask leading questions
 - ✗ Delay reporting

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

“One calm, caring conversation can make a life changing difference.”

Know your DSL. Know your policy. Act supportively.

We have looked in the past at difficult conversations with Children and the Lundy Model and how to include children in conversations about them. In this Newsletter we focus on the **voice of Babies!** How can we hear and facilitate the voice of the young child or baby?



The term **‘voice of the child’** refers to the real involvement of children in expressing their views, opinions, and experiences. It includes both **verbal and nonverbal communication**.



The voice of the child can include both what is said and unsaid, and in babies non-verbal indicators, behaviour and emotions communicate to us.



👉 [Working Together 2026](#) (GOV.UK) Requires a stronger focus on babies and infants' experiences.

It's a Multi-agency responsibility to see, hear, and represent the child.

Space

Adults must create safe and welcoming opportunities (spaces) to share their opinions. Adults need to make these spaces accessible, with a well-trained staff. Children from different backgrounds should be included and feel well taking their space.

Voice

Adults must help children and encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings. This means giving them the information, support, and freedom to decide if and how they want to express themselves.

Audience

Decision makers and/or people in power should carefully listen to what children say. Adults need to genuinely commit to hearing and responding to children's views. The child's opinions should reach the appropriate audience who can influence outcomes.

Influence

Children's views should have a real and tangible impact on decision-making. Decision-makers should consider their opinions carefully and give feedback to children on how their views were considered or why certain decisions were made.


THE LUNDY MODEL

Professor Laura Lundy (Queen's University, Belfast) created a model of child participation to show how to include children in conversations and decisions about them, to ensure that their voices are heard and put into practice.

Our work and interactions with children should be based on this model.



[Click to view](#)



Hello, It's me
Again!

The **NSPCC**
have some
great videos!

Multi-agency Information Sharing

All Health visitors, midwives, GPs, early years staff etc. can...

- Hold pieces of the baby's story
- Share concerns and patterns early
- Build a full picture of the baby's wellbeing



[Video](#)

Expert Insights

Why is the voice of the
infant important?



Expert Insights

What is the potential
impact on the unborn
child and wider family?



[Video](#)



My advice!

1. Pay attention to all the different ways a baby may be trying to communicate
2. Ask other professionals for their knowledge of the baby
3. Identify and speak to those closest to the baby
4. Understand the family's identity and background and check your own biases
5. Challenge barriers to seeing the child
6. Build relationships with the family, attachment and interactions are communication
7. Include the child's voice and your observations in **all** assessments and decisions

Domestic abuse & Baby's Voice

When domestic abuse occurs in pregnancy, it has a direct impact on the expectant parent **and the unborn baby**, it can affect development in the womb, lead to complications at birth and impact on the bond with parents or carers.



Water Safety and Children

Data from National Child Mortality Database informs us that there were 196 **child** drowning deaths April 2019 –March 2025 (135 Male and 61 Female).

Urgent water safety warning after UK deaths
27 May 2026 · People in the UK have been issued an urgent water safety warning following a series of open-water deaths in the past few days.

Children aged **under 5 and those aged 13-17 years** continued to be most at risk of drowning.

Gavin Ellis, NFCC Drowning Prevention lead, said:
“No family should have to experience the devastation of losing a loved one in the water. We know that warm weather encourages people to visit rivers, lakes and reservoirs, but these places can be extremely dangerous. Cold water shock can affect anyone, no matter how confident they feel in the water. These incidents can happen very quickly, but many are preventable.

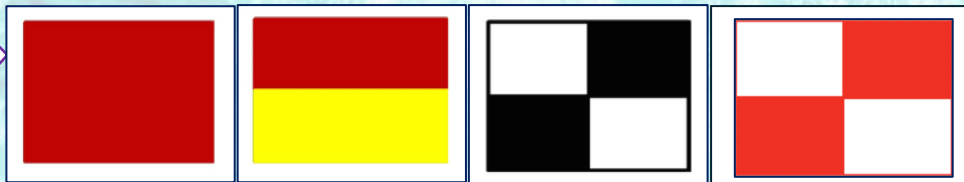
Children of **black ethnicity** have more than three times the risk of drowning compared with children of white ethnicity.

The risk of drowning was more than twice as high for children who lived in the most deprived area... Death rates differed across regions with children living in the Northwest having the highest drowning rate.

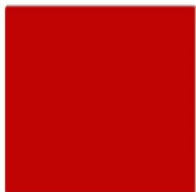
If in Doubt... Don't Go out!



Do you know your beach flag warnings?




Flags: How did you do



Red Dangerous
Lifeguards are not watching this area
Do not swim here



Red and Yellow
Lifeguards on duty
Swim between the flags



Black and White
Water Sports:
Do not swim here



Red and White
Sharks, Don't swim
Not often used in this country!

Resources: Royal Life Saving Society

Mates speak up
when someone's about to jump into water from a bridge, jetty or harbour.

You hit the water... and suddenly you can't breathe.
Swimming becomes impossible.
High-speed impact can cause life-changing injuries.

If it feels off, say it. Don't hype it. Stop it. Speak up. Be a mate.




ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE



Whenever you are around water:

STOP AND THINK

Take time to assess your surroundings. Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.



STAY TOGETHER

When around water always go with friends or family. Swim at a lifeguarded venue.



In an emergency:

CALL 999

If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Don't enter the water to rescue.



FLOAT

Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.





Summer water safety

Accidents are mostly preventable with the correct knowledge and judgment and here are our tips to staying safe in the water during the summer:

To enjoy the water safely and make the right call...

- **Enter slowly and carefully**
Think carefully about your ability to splash or swim in cold outdoor water. 49% of those who lost their life were classified as swimmers*. Are you really a good swimmer?
- **Stay within reach**
Don't go too far and stay within a standing depth.
- **Always be supervised**
Over 70% of fatal accidents occur in the absence of professional supervision. Seek life guarded areas and always make sure some one is available to raise the alarm.

Summer is an amazing time to enjoy our beautiful waterways but we must be mindful that warmer weather is directly linked to an increase in fatal drowning incidents.

Rivers and Lakes/Lochs pose the greatest statistical risk as there are often hazards that the average person is equipped to handle and there is a lack of professional supervision.

In an emergency...

- **Call 999**
If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Don't enter the water to rescue.
- **If you're in trouble FLOAT and call for help**
Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



STOP AND THINK



STAY TOGETHER



CALL 999



FLOAT

A focus on 'Effective Planning' in Conferences

What – When - How (Key actions to be taken) Effective Planning



The **Child Protection Plan** is a clear, shared roadmap created at a conference that sets out:

- What the worries are
- What needs to change
- Who will do what
- How progress will be measured
- How the child will be kept safe

The **Child Protection Plan** is a plan to outline “*What needs to change to make this child safe, and how will we make that happen?*”

Core Principles remain...

- Agencies clearly understand their roles and thresholds
- Work together actively within multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- Use effective information-sharing systems that practitioners are confident in applying

Delivering good Effective Planning looks like this...



Child Protection Plan Checklist

Understanding & Engagement

- Have all strengths, risks, and worries for each child and family been clearly identified and agreed?
- Are the unique risks and needs of each child addressed?
- Is the plan written in plain, jargon-free language?
- Have children been involved, and do they receive regular updates from a trusted person?

Planning & Design

- Are there clear outcomes for how the child will be kept safe?
- Is the plan SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely)?
- Are services, actions, responsibilities, and purposes clearly set out?
- Are contingencies in place if things don't go to plan?
- Is the plan broken down into manageable steps where needed?

Implementation

- Has the plan been shared with core group members within 2 working days?
- Is information being shared regularly, not just at core group meetings?

Monitoring & Challenge

- Are professionals providing respectful challenge where needed?
- Are chairs escalating concerns where actions are not followed or needs are unmet?

Review & Progress

- Are achievements and progress recognised and celebrated?
- If progress stalls, has there been honest reflection and re-evaluation?
- Before review conference, has the threshold for significant harm been reassessed?
- If stepping down, are next steps clearly agreed?

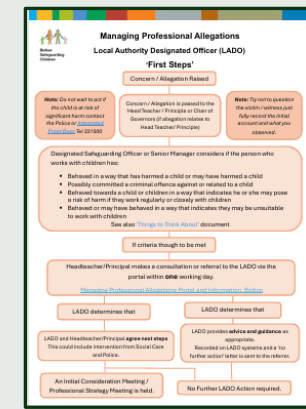
Bolton Safeguarding Children



Keeping children safe in Bolton

Local Authority Designated Officer

First Steps



LADO Referral



We're delighted to welcome **Anne King** to Bolton as our **new LADO**. Anne brings a wealth of experience to the role, and we look forward to working together to support safeguarding across the borough.

When to contact the LADO

You must notify the LADO within 24 hours of any concern or allegation about a person who works or volunteers with children. **This should be done via the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy).**

What is an allegation / concern?

This may include where a person has or may have:

- Harmed a child, or may have done so
- Committed a possible criminal offence involving a child
- Behaved in a way that suggests a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children (and this includes concerns in both professional and personal life).



FREE

Multi-agency Training BROCHURE



1st April 2026
to
31st March 2027

A workshop to support and enable professionals to deal with prejudice, hostility and inappropriate behaviours..

Bystander Training

[Click to Enrol](#)

Wed 9th Sept 2026 @ 1PM

(3 hours Online)



Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence

Tues 30th June
@ 10AM

(90 mins Online)
[Click to Enrol](#)



Domestic Abuse (Management of a Crises Call and Disclosure)

Tues 7th July @ 10am
(90 mins Online)

[Click to Enrol](#)

CPD



WEBINAR

School Attendance:
New Penalty Notice Request Form
and Legal Interventions

Thurs 9th July @ 2PM
(90mins)

[Click to Enrol](#)

Wed 9th Sept, 2026
10AM (90 mins - online)

Sharing my Story of Male Child Sexual Abuse



[Click to Enrol](#)

[Click to Enrol](#)

Prevent Training



Tues 21st July 2026
@ 1PM

(3 hrs – Classroom)

Reducing the Risk of harm when using CSE Resources (Boys)

Tue, Jun 30, 2026, 10:00 AM
(90 mins online)



[Click to Enrol](#)

FREE Training

SKILLS THAT MATTER!

