



Olivia Bailey MP

Minister for Early Education and Minister for Equalities

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Wednesday 18th March 2026

Dear all,

I am writing to inform you of amendments that the department intends to make to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory frameworks this year. Our primary objective is to clarify the safeguarding requirements for sleeping arrangements, as part of our comprehensive review of the proposals raised through the [Campaign for Gigi](#).

Genevieve Meehan's death in 2022 was a devastating tragedy that should never have happened. Our thoughts remain with Genevieve's parents, family members and others that have been affected by this. Children's safety is at the very heart of this government's plan for change and, as Minister for Early Years, the safety of our children is my utmost priority.

It is already expected that early years providers must put children down safely to sleep. All early years providers are required to meet the safer sleep requirements set out in the EYFS statutory framework, which currently links to the NHS safer sleep guidance. Providers should have already taken action to ensure that they are acting in accordance with the NHS guidance. and I urge all providers to ensure that they are doing so.

To make this absolutely clear, I am updating the wording in the EYFS framework so that requirements around safer sleep are set out directly within the framework itself. These changes will come into effect from September 2026, subject to the parliamentary and legislative process but providers must already be compliant with them now. This updated wording has been developed with input from the Lullaby Trust, medical experts and Ofsted and is as follows:

Babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely. For children under 2 years old, providers must ensure that:

- Children are placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor. Babies aged 1 year and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot.*
- Sleep spaces should only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well fitted baby sleep bag may be used. Check the manufacturer*

recommendations before using a baby sleep bag.

- *Where blankets are used, the child is placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.*
- *Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges or straps.*
- *Children should not get too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 – 20°C.*
- *Children's heads are not covered.*
- *Children under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.*
- *Children are always within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.*

Providers must ensure that all staff read NHS advice on [Sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\) – NHS](#). More information on safer sleep guidance is available from [The Lullaby Trust](#).

At the same time, I also intend to make a small number of further amendments to the EYFS frameworks, to update and clarify certain requirements. These include updating the obligations for providers of childcare on domestic premises, to notify Ofsted about persons aged 16 years or older living or working on any premises from which childcare on domestic premises is provided. This would make clear that these requirements apply to providers of childcare on domestic premises, as well as childminders.

I also plan to include a link in the EYFS to updated screentime and online safety guidance for early years settings.

The department is also considering potential changes to ensure that children are suitably protected from banned dog breeds in childcare settings and is conducting a targeted consultation with stakeholders on this matter.

My department continually monitors and reviews safeguarding requirements for early years settings to make sure children are kept as safe as possible. When changes are made to the EYFS statutory frameworks, the Department ensures there is a comprehensive programme of communications and engagement with the sector to support understanding of the changes.

With best wishes,

Olivia Bailey .

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