

01 December 2025

Southport Inquiry – follow up response

Dear Caroline Featherstone,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 October 2025, following up on my evidence to the Southport Inquiry.

I was grateful for the opportunity to discuss these matters with the Chair and the Secretary to the Inquiry in person on the 25 November and I appreciate the opportunity to provide further detail on the key areas you have highlighted. I recognise the importance of these issues to the Inquiry's recommendations, and I am pleased to offer the latest updates, as well as outline any current proposals and collaborative efforts that are underway within the Department for Education ("DfE") and across government.

Violence-Fixated Individuals

The Home Office has been leading cross-government work to consider the need for changes in relation to the identification and management of violence-fixated individuals. DfE and other departments are supporting this work and have contributed to the second witness statement from Cathryn Ellsmore which provides more detail on that work.

Communication of Bail Condition Guidance

The Inquiry requested details on how DfE has communicated to the Crown Prosecution Service ("CPS") and courts the expectation that bail conditions should not ordinarily prevent school attendance.

There is relevant information in CPS guidance ([DFE000259](#)), however the Department had not recently directly communicated such an expectation to the courts or to the CPS. Given the relevance in this case, and to strengthen the DfE position as I set out in my evidence, I have now written to the Youth Justice Policy Unit at the Ministry of Justice. My letter is attached.

Out-of-School Settings ("OOSS")

DfE is committed to ensuring that the *Out-of-school settings: safeguarding guidance for providers* ([DFE000080](#)) is clear and effective in supporting providers to ensure the safety of children attending their settings, and protect them from harm. We will strengthen the guidance to make it clearer on security, health, and safety measures, including areas such as emergency planning. We will do this when we undertake a full review of the existing guidance following the outcome of our Call for Evidence on Out-of-school settings safeguarding. This closed on 21 September, and we are currently analysing responses,

alongside taking forward further engagement with the sector, safeguarding partners and parents via focus groups and roundtables.

In the interim, we will also be able to introduce smaller changes, for example signposting to existing protective security guidance for schools, or other government resources, such as the free government e-learning course, *Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) for Education* (DFE000176), which is designed to help all those working education settings, and relevant security leads, to understand how to keep learners and staff safe from terrorism and other major incidents.

We have not been prescriptive in guidance on areas such as adult-to-child ratios, or recommending specific security or safety features that settings should have in place, given the size and diversity of the sector. What is appropriate in one setting will not necessarily be appropriate or suitable in another. The exact measures that settings should adopt will vary considerably depending on factors such as the setting's nature, location, size, and types of activities it offers.

Information Sharing and Safeguarding Transfers

We are already working on revised content for *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* guidance that will make it clearer that schools should implement robust cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable to mitigate the risk in relation to a single point of failure alongside providing examples of the sort of information on risk that would be helpful to be shared in advance of a pupil starting a new school. The proposed changes will be included as part of the public consultation we plan to launch early in the New Year.

Thank you again for your ongoing collaboration and for highlighting these important areas of safeguarding and policy.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Kate Dixon

Director of Strategy and Safer Streets

Department for Education