Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership Priorities 2026–2029

For the period 2026–2029, Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership will focus on three identified priorities. These reflect evolving risks to children, learning from local and national reviews, and the need to strengthen professional practice in an increasingly complex safeguarding environment.

This priority document details the priority areas, and overarching aims; each year we will develop a detailed business plan with measurable activity to deliver upon these aims. Progress will be updated in our partnership yearly report.

Priority 1: Responding to Technology-Facilitated Harm

What are we worried about?

Children and young people's lives are increasingly shaped by digital spaces. Technology facilitated harm — including online grooming, sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful content, coercion, bullying, and the misuse of artificial intelligence — presents rapidly evolving safeguarding risks that require confident, coordinated multi-agency responses.

Our focus 2026–2029

We will focus on supporting children, parents, carers, and professionals to recognise and reduce the risk of technology facilitated harm, and enabling effective responses to:

- child sexual abuse and exploitation
- AI-enabled harms (e.g. deepfakes, image manipulation, coercive use of technology)
- Social media, gaming, and digital peer groups
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Harmful content for example regarding self-harm and suicide

What will we do?

- Strengthen partnership understanding of technology-facilitated harm and emerging AI-related risks, and how children and young people may be supported to manage their digital lives safely
- Embed online safety and technology-facilitated harm within wider safeguarding pathways rather than treating it as a standalone issue

- Improve identification, assessment, and response to online harm across all agencies
- Ensure learning from local and national reviews and research related to online safety informs practice

How will we know?

- Improved quality of multi-agency assessments and safety planning where online harm is present
- Increased professional confidence in identifying and responding to technology-facilitated risks
- Evidence of appropriate escalation and disruption activity
- Feedback from children and young people demonstrates increased understanding of online risks and support available
- Audits and reviews evidence consistent, confident conversations with children and families about online safety

Priority 2: Embedding an Anti-Racist Safeguarding Approach

What are we worried about?

Safeguarding children effectively requires understanding each child's identity, lived experience, and context. Racism, discrimination, and unconscious bias can undermine safeguarding responses and contribute to unequal outcomes for children and families. Culturally competent and anti-racist practice is essential to ensuring safeguarding is fair, inclusive, and effective. Local and national learning has identified this as an area requiring improvement.

Our focus 2026–2029

- Recognising and addressing racism, bias, and discrimination in safeguarding systems
- Understanding the impact of culture, faith, language, migration, and identity
- Tackling disproportionality in safeguarding responses and outcomes
- Building trust with communities

What will we do?

- Promote an explicit anti-racist approach across partnership safeguarding activity
- Strengthen professional confidence to explore identity, culture, and experiences of racism in assessments
- Use partnership data to identify and address disproportionality and unequal outcomes
- Ensure learning and development activity reflects diverse experiences and perspectives
- Engage communities to inform safeguarding thinking and practice

How will we know?

- Assessments for children routinely evidence that their identity, lived experience and voice has been captured and has informed plans to support and care for them
- Auditing activity and reviews demonstrate professional curiosity about children and families regarding their protected characteristics, including any barriers to services they may experience
- Partner agencies provide assurance of service design being informed by the identified needs of the local population and their feedback
- Partnership data shows improved equity in safeguarding outcomes

Priority 3: Safeguarding unborn and newborn babies

What are we worried about?

Babies are the most vulnerable children and face the highest risk of serious harm or death. Effective safeguarding of babies requires early identification of risk, strong information-sharing, professional curiosity, and timely intervention before harm escalates.

Our focus 2026–2029

- Pre-birth and early infancy safeguarding
- Parental vulnerability, including mental health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse
- Engaging parents and carers effectively
- Safe decision-making for babies at the point of highest vulnerability

What will we do?

- Promote professional curiosity and challenge in cases involving babies
- Strengthen pre-birth and early infancy safeguarding pathways using best practice established in local and national learning
- Improve multi-agency information-sharing and risk assessment for unborn and newborn, to support consistency in thresholds and decision-making across agencies

How will we know?

- Improved quality and timeliness of pre-birth assessments and plans
- Evidence of effective multi-agency challenge and escalation
- Reduction in missed opportunities to identify risk early
- Independent scrutiny provides assurance that babies are being effectively safeguarded