

[News story: New guidance to help parents avoid unsafe out-of-school settings](#)

New guidance to help parents choose safe, high quality out-of-school settings – such as clubs and tuition centres – for their children has been [published today](#).

The document, now open for consultation to ensure it meets parents' needs, sets out ten key questions parents may want to ask providers – as well as the answers they should expect – to help them assure themselves that their children are playing and learning in a safe environment.

Questions include checking whether staff and volunteers have had appropriate training (such as health, safety and child protection), and clarifying whether adults who aren't staff or teachers will be present.

It also sets out a number of red flags parents should look out for, like providers not being aware of how to spot or report concerns of harm, or whether the building looks unsafe or poorly maintained with loose wires and damp present.

The guidance was developed as part of the Integrated Communities Strategy published earlier this year.

School Systems Minister, Lord Agnew, said:

The overwhelming majority of out-of-school settings, from Scouts to dance classes to holiday clubs, offer strong provision in a safe environment. For young people involved it can broaden their experiences and unlock their potential.

I remain concerned, however, about the small minority of settings that may be putting children at risk of harm, or encouraging views that are extremist or dangerous. I hope this guidance will help parents and provide reassurance about the places they are sending their children. It will also help the settings themselves understand what good practice looks like.

A new voluntary safeguarding code of practice is also being consulted on, designed to help providers understand how they can make their setting a safe environment for the children attending it. The voluntary code provides guidance for settings in relation to a wide range of issues, including safeguarding, online safety and suitability of staff.

The consultation follows the announcement earlier this year that the government is investing £3million to boost local authorities' capacity to

improve oversight of out-of-school settings of concern. The work, taking place in pilot areas across the country, is encouraging collaboration between local authorities and relevant agencies, and will be used to identify settings and show how existing legal powers can be most effective in addressing safeguarding and welfare concerns.

The consultation on a code of practice for out-of-school settings and guidance for parents will run for 12 weeks until Sunday 24 February.