

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **DRAFT DOGS LAW (JERSEY) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 202- (P.43/2026) – CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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**Presented to the States on 23rd March 2026  
by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CRIA)

### PART 1: SCREENING

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| Name and title of Duty Bearer:                                             | Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel |
| Type of Duty Bearer:<br>(Minister, Elected Member or States Assembly Body) | Scrutiny Panel                                       |
| Assessment completed by (if not completed by duty bearer):                 | Committee & Panel Officer                            |
| Date:                                                                      | 17/03/2026                                           |

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| <p>1) Name and brief description of the proposed decision<br/>‘Decision’ means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an Assembly proposition</li> <li>• an amendment (or further amendment) to a proposition</li> <li>• for Ministerial duty-bearers, policy under development</li> </ul> <p>The Draft Dogs Law (Jersey) Amendment Regulations 202-, if adopted, will amend the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 to widen the offence of livestock worrying to include a dog that is not on a lead or within 5 metres and under the control of the person in charge of it and is on agricultural land on which there is livestock. But this does not include a dog that is owned by or in the charge of the occupier of the land, the owner of the livestock or a person authorised by one of those people, or a dog being used by a police officer.</p> |
| <p>2) Which groups of children and young people are likely to be affected?<br/>Groups of children could include early years, primary or secondary education; young adults; children with additional learning needs; disabled children; children living in poverty; children from particular ethnic backgrounds; migrants; refugees; care experienced children and LGBTQ+ children</p> <p>The Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 defines an owner as someone aged 16 or over and does not define what constitutes ‘a person in charge’, nor set any minimum age for a person to be considered in charge of a dog. The amendment therefore does not create this risk but marginally increases the circumstances in which it could arise, meaning that children of any age could potentially be affected.</p>                                                         |
| <p>3) What is the likely impact of the proposed decision on children and on their rights?<br/>Impacts may be positive or negative, direct or indirect<br/>Include whether different groups of children will be affected differently by the decision</p> <p>The proposed amendment slightly widens the existing offence in Article 9 of the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961, which already currently makes both the owner and any person in charge of a dog liable if an incident occurs.</p> <p>As the current Law does not define what constitutes “a person in charge” nor set any minimum age for that role, the existing risk that children of any age could inadvertently be considered “in charge” is already present. The amendment does</p>                                                                                                             |

not introduce this risk but increases the range of circumstances in which liability may arise, thereby increasing the likelihood that children and young people could be affected.

However, if children or young people are found guilty of an offence under Article 9 of the amended Law, potential impacts for their rights under the UNCRC include:

Article 3 (best interests of the child)

A 16 or 17-year-old found guilty of livestock worrying may be liable for a Level 2 fine (up to £1,000). This could have a disproportionate impact on young people with little or no independent income.

Article 40 (treatment of children in conflict with the law)

As there is no current minimum age for being considered “a person in charge of a dog,” younger children could technically be subject to enforcement action. The amendment does not introduce specific safeguards or diversionary approaches, meaning outcomes will rely on the application of existing youth justice principles and proportionality in practice.

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Children and young people commonly walk dogs as part of family life, leisure, and exercise. Increased enforcement risk may discourage independent dog walking, potentially impacting opportunities for outdoor activity, exercise and social interaction.

If a child or young person is alleged to have committed an offence under Article 9 they must be treated in a manner consistent with their age, dignity, and worth, and with youth justice standards in Jersey. However, the amendment does not include proportionality measures for children or diversionary approaches. This may result in potential negative impacts by exposing children to enforcement processes not aligned to their developmental needs.

At the same time, the amendment may have positive impacts, the introduction of a clearer legal requirement for dog control near livestock may have a positive effect. Whilst livestock worrying is already an offence under the law, the current provision applies to anyone “in charge of a dog” including older children. Clarifying the legal requirement, through this amendment, could therefore help older children to better understand expectations when walking dogs including the other expectations laid out in the Dogs Law and other Laws that relate to dogs including the Policing of Parks (Jersey) Regulations 2005 and the Policing of Roads (Jersey) Regulations 1959 and improve overall safety in agricultural areas.

It should also be noted that earlier amendments to the Dogs Law were made before that included a CRIA. As a result, issues such as the minimum age of ownership and the minimum age at which a child may legally be considered “in charge” of a dog were not previously assessed from a children’s rights perspective. Although this amendment does not directly address those matters, the clearer articulation of responsibilities may indirectly support safer environments in agricultural and rural areas for children and other road and countryside users.

Overall, the amendment is likely to have a mixed impact on children’s rights. While it may support safety and clarity, it also increases the likelihood that children could

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| fall within the scope of an offence. The extent of impact will depend on how the provisions are implemented in practice, particularly in relation to proportionality and the treatment of children within enforcement processes.                                                                 |
| 4) Is a full Children's Rights Impact Assessment required?<br>If you have identified impacts on children and their rights, a full CRIA should be completed. If no impacts are identified then a Full CRIA is not required, but please explain your rationale and how you reached this conclusion |
| Yes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

If screening determines that a full CRIA is needed, complete Part 2

## Part 2: FULL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

| 5) What will be the impacts (positive or negative) of the proposed decision on children's rights?                              |                                                                                                                                                 |                          |                          |
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| For each of the UNCRC articles described below, click to identify any that may be relevant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                                                                                                                                 |                          |                          |
| Category                                                                                                                       | UNCRC Article                                                                                                                                   | Impact?<br>YES NO        |                          |
| Guiding Principles                                                                                                             | Non-discrimination ( <a href="#">Art 2</a> )                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Best interests of the Child ( <a href="#">Art 3</a> ) to be a top priority                                                                      | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Right to Life survival and development ( <a href="#">Art 6</a> )                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Respect for the child's views ( <a href="#">Art 12</a> )                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Civil Rights & Freedoms                                                                                                        | Right to birth registration, name and nationality ( <a href="#">Art 7</a> )                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Right to an identity ( <a href="#">Art 8</a> )                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Freedom of expression ( <a href="#">Art 13</a> )                                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion ( <a href="#">Art 14</a> )<br>Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Freedom of association ( <a href="#">Art 15</a> )<br>Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Right to Privacy ( <a href="#">Art 16</a> ) including family and home life                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                                                                                                                | Access to information from the media ( <a href="#">Art 17</a> )                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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|                                         | Right to access reliable information from a variety of sources, in a format that children can understand                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                          |                          |
|                                         | Protection against torture or other cruel, degrading or inhumane treatment or punishment ( <a href="#">Art 37(a)</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family Environment and Alternative Care | Respect for the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents (or where applicable, extended family or community) to guide their child as they grow up ( <a href="#">Art 5</a> )                                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Responsibilities of both parents in the upbringing and development of their child ( <a href="#">Art 18</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests ( <a href="#">Art 9</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Family reunification ( <a href="#">Art 10</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Abduction and non-return of children abroad ( <a href="#">Art 11</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet the child's physical and social needs and support their development ( <a href="#">Art 27</a> )                                                                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Special protection for children unable to live with their family ( <a href="#">Art 20</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Best interests of the child in the context of Adoption ( <a href="#">Art 21</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Review of treatment whilst in care ( <a href="#">Art 25</a> )<br>If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Protection from violence, abuse or neglect ( <a href="#">Art 19</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Basic Health and Welfare                | Recovery from trauma and reintegration ( <a href="#">Art 39</a> )<br>Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Rights of disabled children ( <a href="#">Art 23</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Right to health and health services ( <a href="#">Art 24</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Right to social security ( <a href="#">Art 26</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Education, Leisure and                  | Right to adequate standard of living ( <a href="#">Art 27</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Right to education ( <a href="#">Art 28</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                                         | Goals of education ( <a href="#">Art 29</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| Cultural Activities         | Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                          |
|                             | Leisure, play and culture ( <a href="#">Art 31</a> )<br>Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in cultural and artistic activities                                                                                                                       | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Special Protection Measures | Special protection for refugee children ( <a href="#">Art 22</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Children and armed conflict ( <a href="#">Art 38</a> and <a href="#">Optional Protocol #1</a> )<br>Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflict.                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Children and juvenile justice ( <a href="#">Art 40</a> )<br>Right to be treated with dignity and respect, right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of age.                                                                                          | X                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Inhumane treatment and detention ( <a href="#">Art 37 (b)-(d)</a> )<br>Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible.                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Recovery from trauma and reintegration ( <a href="#">Art 39</a> )<br>Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Child labour and right to be protected from economic exploitation ( <a href="#">Art 32</a> )                                                                                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Drug abuse ( <a href="#">Art 33</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Sexual exploitation ( <a href="#">Art 34</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Abduction, sale and trafficking of children ( <a href="#">Art 35</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Protection from other forms of exploitation including for political activities, by the media or for medical research ( <a href="#">Art 36</a> )                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group ( <a href="#">Art 30</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | <a href="#">Optional Protocol</a> on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                             | <a href="#">Optional protocol</a> on the involvement of children in armed conflict                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| 6) Information and research<br>What evidence has been used to inform your assessment? |                                 |                                 |
| Evidence collected<br>(include links to relevant publications)                        | What did the evidence tell you? | What are the data gaps, if any? |

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| <a href="#">Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961</a>                                                                                                                         | <p>That Article 1A defines a “dog owner” as a person who is 16 or over.</p> <p>Article 9 states that a person liable for an offence under this article is a dog owner or a person in charge of a dog</p> | <p>There is no age limit for “any person in charge of the dog”. This is also the same for the <a href="#">Policing of Parks (Jersey) Regulations 2005</a> and the <a href="#">Policing of Roads (Jersey) Regulations 1959</a></p> |
| <a href="#">Public Hearing Transcript: Animal Welfare and Control Review</a><br><a href="#">Witness: States of Jersey Police and Comité des Chef de Police</a> | Article 9 of the Dogs Law has “very low prosecution rates”                                                                                                                                               | Whether any of prosecution cases involved children.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <a href="#">Public Hearing Transcript: Animal Welfare and Control Review</a><br><a href="#">Witness: States of Jersey Police and Comité des Chef de Police</a> | Incidents of animal control are resolved through “words of advice”                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

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| <p>7) Engagement with children<br/>What groups of children and young people (or those who speak on their behalf, such as social workers, teachers or youth workers) have been directly or indirectly involved in developing the decision?</p> |                        |                         |
| Groups consulted                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | How they were involved | What were the findings? |
| None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | N/A                    | N/A                     |

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| <p>8) Assessing Impact on children’s rights<br/>Based on the information collected and analysed above, what likely impact will the proposed decision have on the specific children’s rights identified in question 5)?</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                           |
| Relevant UNCRC Articles (rights) identified in Q5                                                                                                                                                                          | Describe the positive or negative impacts on these rights                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Which group(s) of children are likely to be affected?     |
| Article 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p><u>Positive impacts</u><br/>The amendment introduces a clear, objective rule that dogs must be kept on a lead or within 5 metres and under control when on agricultural land where livestock are present. This clarity may help 16- and 17-year-old dog owners,</p> | <p>16 – 17-year-olds<br/>Children under the age of 16</p> |

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|  | <p>who are legally responsible under the Dogs Law, better understand what is required of them to avoid harming livestock or breaching the law.</p> <p><u>Negative impacts</u><br/> The offence carries a Level 2 fine of up to £1,000, which applies equally to 16 and 17 year-olds because they are legally defined as dog owners. Such a penalty is likely to be financially punitive and disproportionate for children who have little or no independent income. This undermines their best interests by imposing a penalty they are not realistically capable of paying and which could create unnecessary stress within the family environment.</p> <p>Because the current Law does not set a minimum age for being “in charge of a dog,” a child of any age could technically commit an offence if they fail to keep a dog on a lead or within control near livestock. Applying criminal liability to children without explicit age thresholds may negatively impact a child’s sense of safety, development, and wellbeing. This could also be said for the wider Dog Law and other laws that touch on the responsibilities of those who own dogs and who are in charge of dogs.</p> |  |
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| Article 31 | <p><u>Positive impacts</u></p> <p>By introducing objective rules about dog control, the amendment may help make certain rural areas safer for families and children engaging in outdoor recreation. For example, more consistent dog control may reduce the likelihood of frightening encounters with uncontrolled dogs and improve shared-use spaces for walkers, young people, and local communities. It would also reduce the likelihood of children witnessing traumatic cases of livestock in distress and/or being attacked by an uncontrolled dog.</p> <p>A further positive impact would be for children of livestock owners whose business may be threatened and livelihood put in financial jeopardy by losing their livestock.</p> <p><u>Negative Impacts</u></p> <p>There is a potential for indirect impacts on children's opportunities for play, leisure and outdoor activity. If children and young people are considered to be at risk of enforcement action or fines for breaches of the legislation, some parents or guardians may choose to limit or supervise dog walking activities more closely. This could, in some cases, reduce opportunities for</p> | <p>16 and 17-year-olds<br/>Children under the age of 16</p> |
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|            | <p>independent outdoor activity, autonomy, and engagement with the natural environment.</p> <p>A Level 2 fine (up to £1,000) represents a significant financial penalty. Where liability falls on a child or young person, this may have wider implications for the household. In some circumstances, this could affect discretionary spending, including on recreational or cultural activities, although this would depend on individual household circumstances.</p> <p>The impact may vary depending on location. Children living in more rural parishes, where access to agricultural land and livestock is more common, may be more likely to encounter situations where the legislation applies. As a result, there may be a greater likelihood of behavioural restrictions affecting outdoor activity in these areas compared to more urban settings.</p> |                                                             |
| Article 40 | <p><u>Positive Impacts</u></p> <p>If enforcement bodies apply the law proportionately and in line with Jersey's youth justice principles, older adolescents (16–17) who are legally dog owners may experience the justice process in a way that focuses on education and understanding consequences. This could</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>16 and 17-year-olds<br/>Children under the age of 16</p> |

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|  | <p>encourage responsible behaviour around animals and agricultural settings.</p> <p><u>Negative Impacts</u><br/> The amendment widens the circumstances in which an offence may occur under Article 9 of the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961. As the Law applies to both the owner and any “person in charge” of a dog, and does not define a minimum age for that role, children of any age could, in theory, fall within scope where a dog is not kept under the required level of control near livestock.</p> <p>This reflects the existing position in the Law; however, the broader application of the offence increases the likelihood that children and young people could be subject to enforcement processes. Younger children, in particular, may have a more limited understanding of legal responsibilities and expectations in these situations.</p> <p>Under the current Law, a person aged 16 or over can be considered the owner of a dog. As a result, 16 and 17-year-olds may be subject to the same offence provisions and Level 2 fine (up to £1,000) as adults, without specific differentiation based on age or maturity.</p> <p>In practice, any child alleged to have</p> |  |
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| <p>9) Weighing positive and negative impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a negative impact is identified for any area of rights <u>or</u> any group of children and young people, what options are there to modify the proposed decision to mitigate the impact?</li> <li>• Could any positive impacts be enhanced?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
| <p>Potential negative impacts have been identified in relation to Articles 3, 31 and 40 of the UNCRC. However, it is important to note that the amendment does not introduce new forms of liability for children, but rather extends the circumstances in which the existing provisions may apply, thereby marginally increasing the likelihood of children being affected.</p> <p>In practice, the likelihood of significant impact may be limited. Evidence provided by the States of Jersey Police indicates that prosecution rates for livestock worrying are very low, and that incidents are most often addressed through advice or informal resolution. This suggests that children and young people are unlikely to be routinely drawn into formal justice processes.</p> <p>The amendment may also have some positive impacts. Clearer expectations regarding dog control near livestock may support improved understanding of responsible behaviour, including among older children, and contribute to safer use of rural spaces.</p> <p>Further positive outcomes could be supported through complementary measures. For example, improved signage on agricultural land, clearly marked walking routes, and designated off-lead recreational areas may help children and families better understand where and how dogs can be exercised safely. This may support confidence in outdoor activity and contribute positively to children's wellbeing, in line with Article 31. The Panel has previously recommended, through its Scrutiny Report (S.R.7/2026), that the Comité des Connétables undertake a public awareness campaign and encourage livestock owners to install clear signage in grazing areas. Such measures would help ensure that dog owners, including children and young</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |

people, are aware of their responsibilities and the potential consequences of non-compliance.

Overall, while there are some potential negative impacts, these are likely to be limited and mitigated in practice, particularly where proportionate enforcement and clear guidance are applied. The amendment may also contribute to improved safety and awareness, which supports a balanced assessment of its impact on children's rights.

#### 10) Conclusions

In summary, what are your key findings on the impact of the proposed decision on the rights of Jersey children?

Although the amendment to Article 9 of the Dogs (Jersey) Law 1961 slightly widens the existing offence and therefore marginally increases the theoretical risk of unintended consequences for children, this risk already exists under the current Law, therefore the Panel does not consider additional safeguards to be necessary in practice.