



Child Safeguarding Practice Review Guidance

1. Definition

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- Abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected; and
- The child has died or been seriously harmed.

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It should also cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment should be exercised in cases where the impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately certain.

2. Notifications of Serious Child Safeguarding Events

Where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel) if –

- The child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area; or While normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England. 16C(1) of the Children Act 2004 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017

The local authority (NEL Childrens Social Care) must notify the Panel of any event that meets the criteria within 5 working days of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. A copy of the notification will be provided to the partnership support office by the Local Authority on the same day that it is submitted. The local authority should also report the event to the safeguarding partners in their area (and in other areas if appropriate) within 5 working days. Where the child was Looked After, the local authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted that they have died, regardless of whether abuse or neglect is known or suspected. The duty to notify serious child safeguarding events to the Panel rests with the local authority. Information on the process to be followed using the Child Incident Notification System can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Any organisation with statutory or official duties in relation to children (including the Child Death Overview Panel - CDOP - and all members of the partnership) should inform the safeguarding partners of any incident which they think should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review. This should be undertaken using the NEL SCP Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Notification to Safeguarding Partners form following discussion with the Safeguarding Lead within the organisation and agreement by the Service Manager. Professionals should discuss the case with their agency Safeguarding Lead/officer to help formulate the rationale. A referral should be made as soon as possible after the serious incident occurs. The notification to safeguarding partners form should be completed [SCSI 1 – Notification to Safeguarding Partners](#).

3. Responsibilities of the Safeguarding Partners in the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Process including the Rapid Review

Safeguarding partners must make arrangements to:

- Identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area; and
- Commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken
- Other agencies working with children should inform the safeguarding partners of any incident which they think should be considered for a child safeguarding practice review

Locally, the North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Partners have made arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to their area. The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Group (CSPR) has been given its mandate by the North East Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (NEL SCPB). They will commission and oversee the rapid review of those cases and make a recommendation to the SCP Executive whether a practice review should be undertaken, or not.

Undertaking a rapid review:

- The safeguarding partners should promptly undertake a rapid review of any case which meets the criteria for a serious child safeguarding incident (see [Section 2, Notifications of Serious Child Safeguarding Events](#)), in line with any guidance published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.
- The NEL Safeguarding Review Group will arrange for a 'Rapid Review' to be undertaken and completed for:
 - All cases notified to them as a result of the notification of incidents process.
 - All cases raised for consideration of a review by partner organisations.
 - This should be completed within 15 days of the safeguarding partners becoming aware of the incident. The aim of this rapid review is to enable safeguarding partners to:
 - Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time by contacting local agencies and asking them to produce a brief overview report;
 - Discuss whether there is any immediate action required to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately;
 - Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - Decide what steps should be taken next, including whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review.
 - The brief overview report from local agencies should determine the level of their involvement with the child and the family (if any) and provide an overview of any key significant events and the dates of their involvement. Agencies should also report on any areas of inter-agency practice that may highlight future learning either because it worked well or because it caused concern. Agencies should also secure any relevant record/files in a secure place and keep a copy of the report they submitted to the rapid review as they may be required to provide more detailed information if a national or a local safeguarding practice review is subsequently commissioned.

During the rapid review process all agencies should consider the impact of the serious child safeguarding case on the welfare of the relevant staff and provide support that is in line with their organisation's policies and procedures. See Appendix one Rapid Review process

The safeguarding partners representatives of the Safeguarding Practice Review Group will meet to evaluate agencies reports and decide the next steps, including their recommendation to the safeguarding partners about whether or not to undertake a child safeguarding practice review or whether they think the case may raise issues which are complex or of national importance such that a national review may be appropriate.

The Timescales for the Rapid Review Process and the Decision of the Panel

A rapid review into all serious child safeguarding cases has to be completed within 15 working days of safeguarding partners becoming aware of the incident. As soon as the rapid review is complete, the safeguarding partners should send a copy to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (The Panel may share this with DfE if requested, to enable DfE to carry out its functions).

They should also share with the Panel their decision about whether a local child safeguarding practice review is appropriate, or whether they think the case may raise issues which are complex, or of national importance such that a national review may be appropriate.

They may also do this at a later stage if, during the course of a local child safeguarding practice review, new information comes to light which suggests that a national review may be appropriate.

As soon as they have determined that a local review will be carried out, the safeguarding partners should inform the National Panel, Ofsted and DfE, including the name of any reviewer they have commissioned. This will be undertaken via agencies providing a written report about the facts of the case and the potential for identifying improvements. There will be discussion between the representatives and any agency where clarity is required supported by the SCP. The Panel will aim to respond promptly with a decision on the majority of cases within 15 working days of a rapid review being received.

4. Deciding whether to carry out a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

When a serious incident becomes known to the safeguarding partners, they must consider whether the case meets the criteria for a local review. Meeting the criteria does not mean that safeguarding partners must automatically carry out a local child safeguarding practice review. It is for partners to determine whether a review is appropriate, taking into account that the overall purpose of a review is to identify improvements to practice:

- Issues might appear to be the same in some child safeguarding cases but reasons for actions and behaviours may vary resulting in different learning to be gained from similar cases. Decisions on whether to undertake reviews should be made transparently and the rationale communicated appropriately, including to families
- The criteria which the local safeguarding partners must take into account when determining whether to carry out a local child safeguarding practice review includes whether the case highlights or may highlight
- Improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified
- Recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children;
- Concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies failing to work together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Or is a case which the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have considered and concluded a local review may be more appropriate
- Safeguarding partners should also have regard to the following circumstances:

- Where they have cause for concern about the actions of a single agency
- There has been no agency involvement with the child / family prior to the incident and this causes for concern
- More than one Local Authority, police force area or Integrated Care Board (ICB) place area is involved, including in cases where families have moved around
- The case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings (this includes children's homes (including secure children's homes) and other settings with residential provision for children; custodial settings where a child is held, including police custody, young offender institutions and secure training centres; and all settings where detention of a child takes place, including under the Mental Health Act 1983 or the Mental Capacity Act 2005)
- Some cases may not meet the definition of a 'serious child safeguarding case' but the safeguarding partners may choose to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review because they raise issues of importance to the local area, for example good practice, poor practice or where there have been 'near miss' events

As soon as safeguarding partners have determined that a local practice review will be carried out, they should inform the Panel, Ofsted and DfE, including the name of any reviewer they have commissioned.

5. The Role of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

On receipt of the information from the rapid review, the Panel must decide whether it is appropriate to commission a national review of a case or cases. In doing so they must consider the criteria and guidance below.

- The criteria which the Panel must consider whether the case:
- Highlights or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified;
- Raises or may raise issues requiring legislative change or changes to guidance issued under or further to any enactment;
- Highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children.
- The Panel should also have regard to the following circumstances:
- Significant harm or death to a child educated otherwise than at school;
- Where a child is seriously harmed or dies while in the care of a local authority, or while on (or recently removed from) a child protection plan;
- Cases which involve a range of types of abuse; or
- Where the case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings.
- The Panel should inform the relevant safeguarding partners promptly following receipt of the rapid review, if they consider that:
- A national review is appropriate, setting out the rationale for their decision and next steps;
- Further information is required to support the Panel's decision-making (including whether the safeguarding partners have taken a decision as to whether to commission a local review). The safeguarding partners must share further information with the Panel as requested.
- When making decisions on whether to undertake national reviews, the Panel should communicate their rationale appropriately, including to families. If the Panel decides to undertake a national review they should discuss with the relevant safeguarding partners the potential scope and methodology of the review and how they will engage

with them and those involved in the case. The Panel will also notify the Secretary of State.

There will be instances where a local review has been carried out which could then form part of a thematic review that the Panel undertakes later. There may also be instances when a local review has not been carried out but where the Panel considers that the case could be helpful to a national review at some stage in the future. In such circumstances, the Panel should engage with safeguarding partners to agree the conduct of the review.

Alongside any national or local reviews, there could be a criminal investigation, a coroner's investigation and/or professional body disciplinary procedures. The Panel and the safeguarding partners should have clear processes for how they will work with other investigations, including Domestic Homicide Reviews, multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) reviews or Safeguarding Adults Reviews, and work collaboratively with those responsible for carrying out those reviews.

This is important to reduce burdens on and anxiety for the children and families concerned and to minimise duplication of effort and uncertainty.

Guidance for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel – Reviewers

The Panel must set up a pool of potential reviewers who can undertake national reviews, a list of whom must be publicly available. If they consider that there are no potential reviewers in the pool with availability or suitable experience to undertake the review, they may select a person who is not in the pool. When selecting a reviewer, the Panel should consider whether they have any conflict of interest, which could restrict their ability, or perceived ability, to identify improvements impartially. If the Panel determines that a reviewer they appointed should be removed from a review prior to the report or information relating to improvements being published, the Secretary of State must remove the reviewer from the review.

For national child safeguarding practice reviews, the Panel should follow the same guidance on procedure and supervision as for local child safeguarding practice reviews set out in the following section.

6. Commissioning a Reviewer for a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review

The safeguarding partners are responsible for commissioning and supervising reviewers for local reviews.

- In all cases they should consider whether the reviewer has the following:
- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to local child safeguarding practice reviews, including the ability to engage both with practitioners and children and families;
- Knowledge and understanding of research relevant to children's safeguarding issues;
- Ability to recognise the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together to safeguard children;
- Ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals, organisations or agencies involved at the time rather than using hindsight;
- Ability to communicate their findings effectively; and
- Whether the reviewer has any real or perceived conflict of interest.
- Safeguarding partners may also consider appointing reviewers from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's pool of reviewers where available. The safeguarding partners may remove a reviewer from a review at any time prior to the report of the review, or information relating to improvements, being published.

7. The Review Process

The safeguarding partners should agree with the reviewer(s) the method by which the review should be conducted, taking into account this guidance and the principles of the systems methodology recommended by the [Munro review](#). The methodology should provide a way of looking at and analysing frontline practice as well as organisational structures and learning. The methodology selected should be able to draw out recommendations that will improve outcomes for children. All reviews should reflect the child's perspective and the family context.

The review should be proportionate to the circumstances of the case, focus on potential learning, and establish and explain the reasons why the events occurred as they did. As part of their duty to ensure that the review is of satisfactory quality, the safeguarding partners should seek to ensure that: practitioners are fully involved in reviews and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith.

Families, including surviving children, should be invited to contribute to reviews. This is important for ensuring that the child is at the centre of the process. Families should be helped to understand how they are going to be involved and their expectations should be managed appropriately and sensitively.

The safeguarding partners must supervise the review to ensure that the reviewer is making satisfactory progress and that the review is of satisfactory quality.

The safeguarding partners may request information from the reviewer during the review to enable them to assess progress and quality; any such requests must be made in writing. The President's guidance: Judicial Cooperation with Serious Case Reviews should also be noted in the context of child safeguarding practice reviews.

8. Expectations for the Final Report

Safeguarding partners must ensure that the final report includes:

- A summary of any recommended improvements to be made by persons in the area to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- An analysis of any systemic or underlying reasons why actions were taken or not in respect of matters covered by the report.
- Any recommendations should be clear on what is required of relevant agencies and others collectively and individually, and by when, and focus on improving outcomes for children.

Reviews should promote and share information about improvements, both within the area and potentially beyond, and safeguarding partners must publish the report, unless they consider it inappropriate to do so. In such a circumstance, they must publish any information about the improvements that should be made following the review as they consider appropriate. The name of the reviewer(s) should be included. Published reports or information must be publicly available for at least one year.

When compiling and preparing to publish the report, the safeguarding partners should consider carefully how best to manage the impact of the publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case. The safeguarding partners should ensure that reports are written in such a way so that what is published avoids harming the welfare of any children or vulnerable adults involved in the case.

Safeguarding partners must send a copy of the full report to the Panel and to the Secretary of State no later than 7 working days before the date of publication. Where the safeguarding

partners decide only to publish information relating to the improvements to be made following the review, they must also provide a copy of that information to the Panel and the Secretary of State within the same timescale. They should also provide the report, or information about improvements, to Ofsted within the same timescale.

Depending on the nature and complexity of the case, the report should be completed and published as soon as possible and no later than 6 months from the date of the decision to initiate a review.

Where other proceedings may have an impact on or delay publication, for example an ongoing criminal investigation, inquest or future prosecution, the safeguarding partners should inform the Panel and the Secretary of State of the reasons for the delay. Safeguarding partners should also set out for the Panel and the Secretary of State the justification for any decision not to publish either the full report or information relating to improvements. Safeguarding partners should have regard to any comments that the Panel or the Secretary of State may make in respect of publication.

Every effort should also be made, both before the review and while it is in progress to:

- Capture points from the case about improvements needed; and
- Take corrective action and disseminate learning.
- The Panel – Expectations for the Final Report
- The Panel must ensure that the final report includes:
- A summary of any improvements being recommended to the safeguarding partners and/or others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- An analysis of any systemic or underlying reasons why actions were taken or not taken in respect of matters covered by the report.
- The Panel must publish the report, unless they consider it inappropriate to do so. In such a circumstance they must publish any information about the improvements that should be made following the review as they consider appropriate. The name of the reviewer(s) should be included.

The Panel should work with safeguarding partners to identify and manage the impact of the publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case.

The Panel must ensure that reports or information published are publicly available for at least 3 years. The Panel must send a copy of the full report to the Secretary of State no later than 7 working days before the date of publication. Where the Panel decides only to publish information relating to the improvements to be made following the review, they must also provide a copy of that information to the Secretary of State within the same timescale. The Panel should also send a copy of the report or improvements to the relevant safeguarding partners, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

Reports should be completed and published within 6 months of the date of the decision to initiate a review. Where other proceedings may have an impact on or delay publication, for example an ongoing criminal investigation, inquest or future prosecution, the Panel should advise the Secretary of State of the reasons for the delay. The Panel should also set out for the Secretary of State the explanation for any decision not to publish either the full report or information relating to improvements. During the review, the Panel should share any points that arise about improvements needed with the safeguarding partners in any local authority areas covered by the review and others as applicable.

The Panel should send copies of published reports of national and local child safeguarding practice reviews, or published information relating to improvements that should be made following those reviews, to the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care and relevant inspectorates, bodies or individuals as they see fit. Where a local review results in findings which are of national importance, or in recommendations for national government, the Panel should consider the potential of those recommendations to improve systems to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and how best to disseminate and embed such learning.

9. Learning from Local and National Reviews

The safeguarding partners should take account of the findings from their own local reviews and from all national reviews, with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally, including the way in which organisations and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The safeguarding partners should highlight findings from reviews with relevant parties locally and should regularly audit progress on the implementation of recommended improvements. Improvement should be sustained through regular monitoring and follow up of actions so that the findings from these reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

10. Interface with other reviewing processes

Alongside any national or local reviews, there could be a criminal investigation, a coroner's investigation and/or professional body disciplinary procedures. The Panel and the safeguarding partners should have clear processes for how they will work with other investigations, including Domestic Homicide Reviews, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements Reviews or Safeguarding Adults Reviews and work collaboratively with those responsible for carrying out those reviews. This is to reduce burdens on and anxiety for the children and families concerned and to minimise duplication of effort and uncertainty.

In North East Lincolnshire, the safeguarding partners and/or their representatives will liaise with the relevant lead for the other review process(es) to ensure that a parallel review process(es) are undertaken to reduce burdens on and anxiety for the children and families concerned and to minimise duplication of effort and uncertainty.

11. Appendix 1: NEL SCS1 Notification

[SCSI 1 – Notification to Safeguarding Partners](#)

12. Further Information

[Working Together to Safeguard Children - Chapter 4: Improving child protection and safeguarding practice](#)

[Report a serious child safeguarding incident - GOV.UK](#)

[Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency \(England\) Regulations 2018](#)

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