

Deciding whether to convene a Serious Case Review or alternative learning review using the new ‘Rapid Review’ process

Referral

Agencies should inform the relevant designated single point of contact for the LSCB of any serious incident which they think should be considered for either a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review or a Serious Case Review, using the *Referral Form (Document 1)*.

Local authorities have a separate duty to:

- notify the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if a child dies or is seriously harmed in their area (or outside of England while they are normally resident in the local authority area);
- notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

Where a local authority makes a formal notification to the national Panel or Ofsted, it must always share this with the relevant LSCB and also complete the formal Referral Form for a Serious Case Review.

Rapid Review

When notified about an incident that might be subject of either a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review or Serious Case Review (pending the replacement of serious case reviews with local child safeguarding practice reviews), the LSCB is required to promptly undertake a Rapid Review of the case.

The Rapid Review must be completed within the timescales outlined in guidance from the national Panel. (Interim advice issued on 4 July 2018 states this should be within 15 working days of becoming aware of the incident). A flow chart setting out the key stages and timescales is included at the end of this section.

Initial Scoping, Information Sharing and the Securing of Records

All agencies who have had involvement with the subject child or family will be required to contribute to a Rapid Review. An initial scoping of agencies’ intervention will, therefore, need to be completed and other relevant information will need to be rapidly gathered. To support this, a *Template for Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* is included as part of this Practice Guidance along with a sample letter to accompany the template.

The purpose of the initial scoping and information sharing is **to gather the basic facts about the case, including determining the extent of agency involvement with the child and family**. More detailed information will be sought if the Rapid Review concludes the case has the potential to identify national or local learning and a decision is made to recommend a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review, a Serious Case Review or an alternative Learning Review.

The *Template for Initial Scoping and Information Sharing (Document 2)* should be sent out to all relevant agencies **within 2 working days** of receiving the referral, along with an accompanying letter that briefly outlines the referral and explains the purpose of this initial scoping (*Document 3*).

Agencies should prioritise completion of the form and return it **within 5 working days**.

All agencies should also secure all records/files in relation to the case, ensuring they are removed to a secure place where they are not accessible to agency personnel other than

through a nominated representative. (This request is included in the template letter – Document 3). Where access to the records is required for ongoing case work, a copy should be made and secured.

Setting the Date of the Rapid Review Meeting

Some areas in the wider West Midlands will have a standing Group which meets regularly to oversee learning from serious incidents and this Group will be well placed to undertake the Rapid Review of new referrals. Other areas may have to convene an extraordinary meeting to undertake the Rapid Review.

The date of the Rapid Review meeting¹ should be set as soon as the *Templates for Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* have been sent out. The Rapid Review meeting should be scheduled **between 7 and 13 working days** of receiving the referral. This will allow for analysis of the *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* to establish the key events in the child's life and inform the Rapid Review whilst also allowing sufficient time to prepare the necessary documents for the national Panel.

Documentation

The following documents should be shared with all those attending the Rapid Review meeting:

- the completed *Serious Incident Referral Form* that initiated the process;
- the Local Authority Serious Incident Notification to Ofsted, DfE and the national panel in relation to the incident (if completed);
- copies of the completed *Initial Scoping and Information Sharing* templates from relevant agencies.

Wherever possible the documentation should be shared with participants in advance of the meeting. However, it is recognised that it may on occasion be necessary to share documentation at the meeting.

The Rapid Review Meeting

The Rapid Review meeting should:

- review the facts about the case as presented in the documentation;
- discuss whether there is any immediate action needed 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 whether or not to recommend a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review or undertake a local Serious Case Review. If the decision is not to proceed with a formal Child Safeguarding Practice Review or Serious Case Review, the Group will consider whether an alternative form of learning review is appropriate. In some cases, the rapid review process may identify key local learning that can be quickly acted upon, removing the need for further review.

The *Rapid Review Template (Document 4)* should be completed and agreed at this meeting. While LSCBs continue to initiate Serious Case Reviews, the LSCB Independent Chair should

¹ Where absolutely essential to meet the required timescales, extraordinary meetings may be held via tele-conference.

then be asked to consider and endorse the outcome of the Rapid Review: the date this endorsement is obtained should be included on the form.

Sharing the Outcome of the Rapid Review

Within 2 working days of the Rapid Review meeting, the LSCB should send the completed *Rapid Review Template* to the national Panel (Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk) together with a covering letter, see [Sample letter to accompany the Rapid Review Template \(Document 5\)](#).

Other agencies (including the agency who made the referral) should also be informed of the outcome of the Rapid Review.

Overview of the process to decide whether to convene a Serious Case Review or alternative learning review and the associated timescales.

