



Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Framework and Practice Guidance

V1.00

November 2020

Contents

Who is the Guidance for?	3
About this Guidance.....	3
1. Introduction and Context	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Purpose and Criteria for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews	4
1.3 Definition of a Serious Child Safeguarding Case	4
1.4 Criteria for a local safeguarding practice review	4
1.5 Approach and Principles	5
1.6 Strategic Leadership and Governance	6
2. Information Sharing	6
3. Timescale for Completion of the Review	7
4. Deciding whether to Convene a Child Safeguarding Practice Review	7
4.1 Notification and Referral	7
4.2 Rapid Reviews (where a Local Authority notification has been made)	8
4.3 Initial Scoping, Information Sharing and the Securing of Records	8
4.4 Setting the Date of the Rapid Review Meeting	9
4.5 Documentation	9
4.6 The Rapid Review Meeting	9
4.7 Independent Advice on Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Review decisions.....	10
4.8 Sharing the Outcome of the Rapid Review	10
4.9 Flowchart of the Process to decide whether to commission a Child Safeguarding Practice Review and the associated timescales.....	11
5. Agreeing the Scope and Terms of Reference	13
5.1 Developing the Terms of Reference.....	13
5.2 Scoping Period.....	13
5.3 Focus of the Review.....	13
5.4 Methodology.....	13
5.5 Engaging Children and Family Members	13
5.6 Parallel Investigations	14
5.7 Legal Advice.....	14
5.8 Timetable	14
6. Appointing the Independent Reviewer and Case Review Panel	14
6.1 The Independent Reviewer	14
6.2 The Case Review Panel.....	14
7. Engaging Children and Family Members	15
7.1 Approach and Principles	15
7.2 Identifying the Family Network	15
7.3 Making Initial Contact with the Family	15
7.4 Conversations with Family Members.....	15
8. Methodology.....	15
8.1 The 'Systems Methodology' and Expectations of Agencies	15
8.2 Agency Action and Expectations	16
8.3 Information Collection and Collation.....	16
8.4 Chronologies	16
8.5 Information Reports.....	16
8.6 Factual Summaries	17
8.7 Quality Assurance of Agency Submissions	17
8.8 Establishing Key Themes.....	17
8.9 Reflective Learning Workshop	17

8.10	Preparing for the Learning Workshop.....	17
8.11	The Structure of the Learning Workshop.....	18
8.12	Conversations with Key Practitioners	18
8.13	Practitioner Feedback Event	18
9.	The Report	19
9.1	The Report	19
9.2	Developing the Learning Points and Recommendations.....	19
10.	Publication.....	20
10.1	Requirements.....	20
10.2	Preparing for Publication	20
10.3	Managing the Impact of Publication	20
10.4	Media Strategy	20
10.5	Formal Publication.....	20
11.	Embedding Learning	21
11.1	Purpose.....	21
11.2	Capturing improvements and Taking Corrective Action while the Review is in Progress.....	21
11.3	Disseminating and Sharing Learning from the Review.....	21
11.4	Monitoring Progress	21
11.5	Taking into Account Learning from National Reviews	21

Who is the Guidance for?

This practice guidance should be read by local Safeguarding Partners, and all agencies involved in the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, which replaced the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). The guidance is particularly aimed at those involved in undertaking or contributing to local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, such as Independent Lead Reviewers, Case Review Panel members, those providing information reports on behalf of their agency/organisation as well as those responsible for quality assuring and embedding the learning from the review process.

About this Guidance

This guidance provides Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland with a framework for the commissioning and dissemination of learning from local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. It should be read alongside the relevant statutory guidance set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* and the *Working Together: transitional guidance (2018)*.

1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a new legal framework in respect of local safeguarding arrangements for children. Responsibility for how a system learns lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents now rests at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and at a local level with the three Safeguarding Partners (Clinical Commissioning Groups, Police and Local Authorities) and other partner agencies. They will need to consider whether to conduct a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected, and the child has died or been seriously harmed.
- 1.1.2 This guidance outlines a shared Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland process for deciding on and commissioning local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in their area. This makes real the local commitment to an improving and learning system, determined to make best use of scarce and precious resources (human and financial) in the best interests of children and families. A shared approach across the sub region:
- reduces the burden on agencies whose work covers more than one Local Authority area as staff only need to understand and work to one set of guidance and templates; and
 - allows practitioners from across the region to provide peer support to those outside their area as everyone is working to the same framework and guidance.
- 1.1.3 This guidance provides professionals with a step-by-step guide to follow when undertaking or participating in a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. It describes the approach, order of events and related timescales whilst also highlighting the key statutory elements outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*. It also outlines responsibilities for key people at every stage of the process and references template documents and letters available for use.
- 1.1.4 There are some local processes which differ between the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (SCPB) and the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP). To allow for this there is flexibility to use, adapt and amend supporting document templates, depending on the needs of the individual Safeguarding Partnership and individual reviews.

1.2 Purpose and Criteria for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

- 1.2.1 The purpose of a Child Safeguarding Practice Review is to explore how practice can be improved through changes to the system itself. Reviews should seek to understand both why mistakes were made and to comprehend whether mistakes made on one case frequently happen elsewhere and to understand why.¹
- 1.2.2 Holding organisations and their leaders to account for the quality of services, and individuals to account for not meeting professional standards, are essential pre-requisites for public confidence in the national safeguarding system. Regulatory bodies for the professions hold this key role. Reviews are not designed for this purpose and will not be used in this way. Nevertheless, where reviews identify any actual or potential errors or violations, they should ensure that proper lines of accountability are followed to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

1.3 Definition of a Serious Child Safeguarding Case

- 1.3.1 *Working Together 2018* defines serious child safeguarding cases as those in which:
- abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and
 - the child has died or been seriously harmed.
- 1.3.2 Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) impairment of physical health and serious / long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.²
- 1.3.3 *Working Together 2018* advises that consideration be given to whether impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately obvious. Even if a child recovers, serious harm may still have occurred.
- 1.3.4 Child perpetrators may be the subject of a review, if the definition of a serious child safeguarding case is met.

1.4 Criteria for a local safeguarding practice review

- 1.4.1 Safeguarding Partners and other partner agencies, as part of the Case Review Group, are required³ to consider certain criteria and guidance when determining whether to carry out a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. They **must take into account** 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;
 - highlights or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children;
 - highlights or may highlight concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
 - is one which the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have considered and concluded that a local review may be more appropriate.
- 1.4.2 They should also **have regard to** the following circumstances:
- where the Safeguarding Partners have cause for concern about the actions of a single agency;

¹ This definition is taken from the Practice Guidance issued by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on 5 April 2019.

² This is not an exhaustive list.

³ By the Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Relevant Agency (England) Regulations 2018.

- where there has been no agency involvement, and this gives the Safeguarding Partners cause for concern;
- where more than one Local Authority, Police area or Clinical Commissioning Group is involved, including in cases where families have moved around;
- where the case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings.⁴

1.4.3 Meeting the criteria does not mean a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review must automatically be undertaken. Instead, the process outlined in this document will be followed to determine whether a review is appropriate (i.e. whether there is potential to identify improvements.)

1.4.4 Child safeguarding reviews may also be undertaken for cases which do not meet the definition of a 'serious child safeguarding case' if they raise issues of importance that could generate learning. *Working Together 2018*, for example, suggests they might take place where there has been good practice, poor practice or where there have been 'near miss' events.

1.4.5 Where the decision made is not to proceed with a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the Safeguarding Partners and other partner agencies will consider whether there are other learning processes that will bring forward improvements.

1.5 Approach and Principles

1.5.1 The Safeguarding Partners have agreed that the approach will be 'systems based'. Each case will, however, be examined individually to determine the most appropriate methodology to identify and maximise learning.

1.5.2 All areas will conduct Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and other learning reviews in line with good practice and the principles of the systems methodology recommended by the Munro Report.⁵ This includes the advice outlined in *Working Together 2018* and its predecessor documents as well as the good practice principles described in the SCIE / NSPCC 'Quality Markers'⁶.

1.5.3 Decisions on whether to undertake a review will be made transparently and the rationale shared with all relevant partners, including families as appropriate.

1.5.4 The child will always be placed at the centre of the process.

1.5.5 All reviews will be proportionate to the circumstances of the case and focus on the potential learning. Specifically, all reviews will be conducted in a way which:

- reflects the child's perspective and family context;
- considers and analyses frontline practice as well as organisational structures and learning;
- establishes the reasons why events occurred as they did;

⁴ 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.

⁵ The systems approach in this guidance was developed based on the model cited in the Munro Report: this is described in SCIE Guide 24: *'Learning together to safeguard children: developing a multi-agency systems approach for case reviews'* by Dr Shelia Fish, Dr Eileen Munro and Sue Bairstow (January 2009).

⁶ Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) and NSPCC's *'Serious Case Review Quality Markers: Supporting dialogue about the principles of good practice and how to achieve them'* (March 2016). Although these were developed for serious case reviews, most of the principles are transferable.

- consider why actions and decisions made sense at the time
- reaches recommendations that will improve outcomes for children.

1.5.6 Families, including surviving children, will be invited to contribute to reviews unless there is a strong reason not to. Steps will be taken to sensitively manage their expectations and ensure they understand how they are going to be involved.

1.5.7 Practitioners will be fully involved in reviews and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith.

1.5.8 All participants in the review process will be asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest and will be expected to adhere to confidentiality. This will be a standard agenda item at all case specific meetings.

1.6 Strategic Leadership and Governance

1.6.1 The decision to proceed to a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review is always a local decision, for which local Safeguarding Partners are accountable. This includes the identification of cases, commissioning and supervising of reviews, and the publication of reports and embedding learning. Safeguarding Partners should take into consideration advice and guidance provided by the National Panel.

1.6.2 The two Safeguarding Children Partnerships in Leicester and Leicestershire & Rutland have Case Review Groups (CRGs) made up of representatives from the Safeguarding Partners in their area along with any relevant safeguarding experts from partner agencies. This Group will undertake a Rapid Review when Local Authority notifications of serious incidents are made to the National Panel. They will also consider other cases referred to them by partner agencies and will take responsibility for commissioning and overseeing any resulting local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or other learning review. This will include monitoring case progression, quality assurance and publication of final reports, and ensuring effective oversight of the implementation of learning.

1.6.3 All decisions related to the commissioning and publication of local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews will be notified to the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.⁷

2. Information Sharing

2.1.1 Information sharing is essential to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Effective Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are equally dependent on all relevant partners sharing the information they hold about the case and associated professional practice.

2.1.2 The Safeguarding Partners have the formal authority to request information to support both national and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and the power to take legal action if information is withheld without good reason.

2.1.3 All agencies will be expected to share relevant information within the timescales requested. This may, when necessary, include sharing information without consent. This includes information about parents, guardians and other family members as well as the child(ren) who are subject of the review.

⁷ This is separate from the formal requirement on Local Authorities in England to notify the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the relevant local Safeguarding Partners 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) and their duty to notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

- 2.1.4 Where a request is for health records, this applies to all records of NHS commissioned care whether provided under the NHS or in the independent or voluntary sector.
- 2.1.5 When making requests for information, the Safeguarding Partners and other partner agencies will consider their responsibilities under the relevant information law and have regard to guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 2.1.6 Good practice principles around information sharing will always be followed, particularly around 'how' information is shared. For example, when responding to requests for information, agencies should:
- Identify how much information to share;
 - Distinguish fact from opinion;
 - Ensure that they give the right information to the right individual;
 - Ensure that they share information securely;
 - Where possible, be transparent with the individual, informing them that that the information has been shared (as long as doing so does not create or increase the risk of harm);
 - Record all information sharing decisions and reasons in line with organisational procedures.
- 2.1.7 In the case of any disagreement or failure to comply with a formal information request, the Independent Lead Reviewer or a Case Review Panel member will refer the issue to the Case Review Group who will seek to resolve this with the strategic Safeguarding Lead for the agency concerned. If a prompt resolution cannot be found, the issue will be escalated to the Safeguarding Partners for formal action.

3. Timescale for Completion of the Review

- 3.1.1 Reviews will vary in their breadth and complexity but, in all cases, learning should be identified and acted upon as quickly as possible. This includes before the review has formally commenced and while it is in progress.
- 3.1.2 A Rapid Review and decision on all referrals should be made within the timescales outlined in guidance from the National Panel (currently **within 15 working days**) and all statutory local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews should be completed no later than **six months** from the date of the decision to initiate a review and more quickly if possible.
- 3.1.3 Sometimes the complexity of a case does not become apparent until the review is in progress. For example, the Police undertaking a criminal investigation may in some instances request the review delay involving specific key individuals. Any delays need to be considered by the relevant Case Review Group as soon as they arise. If the delay will prevent the publication of the final report within six months, the National Panel and Secretary of State should be informed and provided with the reason for the delay.

4. Deciding whether to Convene a Child Safeguarding Practice Review

4.1 Notification and Referral

- 4.1.1 Agencies should inform the relevant designated single point of contact for the Safeguarding Children Partnership of any serious incident which they think should be considered for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, using the *Referral Form*. For Leicester cases, this is the Leicester Safeguarding Boards Office and for Leicestershire & Rutland cases, this is the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Partnerships Business Office.
- 4.1.2 Local Authorities have a separate duty to:

- notify the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if they know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected and the 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.

4.1.3 Where a Local Authority makes a formal notification to the National Panel, it must always share this with the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Office. If required by local processes they should also complete the formal *Referral Form* for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review.

4.1.4 A notification by the Local Authority to the National Panel will result in a Rapid Review (see 4.2 below)

4.1.5 There will be instances when a referral is made to the Case Review Group by an agency which does not result in a Rapid Review. For example, in a situation where an agency believes a case should be considered by the Case Review Group for a potential Child Safeguarding Practice Review, but it does not meet the criteria for a Local Authority Notification to the National Panel. The formal *Referral Form* should be used to make a referral to the Case Review Group in these circumstances.

4.1.6 Where there is no requirement for a Rapid Review, due to the circumstances described at 4.1.5, the following documents can then be used to assist the Case Review Group with obtaining agency information:

- *Information Request Letter*
Should be used to make a request for information to agencies to assist the Case Review Group to discuss potential Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- *Information Request Reply Template*
Is a template for agencies to record information for the Case Review Group meeting.

4.1.7 The Case Review Group will discuss the case and make a decision if the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review are met. If they are, the National Panel will be informed and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review process will be followed.

4.2 Rapid Reviews (where a Local Authority notification has been made)

4.2.1 Rapid Reviews should assemble the facts of the case as quickly as possible in order to establish whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure a child's safety and the potential for practice learning.

4.2.2 The Rapid Review must be completed within the timescales outlined in guidance from the National Panel (currently **15 working days** of becoming aware of the incident). A flowchart, setting out the key stages and timescales, is included at the end of this section.

4.3 Initial Scoping, Information Sharing and the Securing of Records

4.3.1 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, an *Information Request Reply Template* will be sent out, accompanied by an *Information Request Letter*.

4.3.2 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 progress to a formal Child Safeguarding Practice Review or alternative Learning Review.

4.3.3 **The *Information Request Reply Template* should be sent out to all relevant agencies as soon as possible. In all cases 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.**

4.3.4 Agencies should prioritise completion of the template and return it by the deadline included in the letter.

4.3.5 All agencies should consider if they need to 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.

4.4 Setting the Date of the Rapid Review Meeting

4.4.1 The Case Review Groups meet monthly to oversee learning from serious incidents and the Groups will be well placed to undertake the Rapid Review of new referrals. Where required, the group will convene an extraordinary meeting to undertake the Rapid Review. At present, both Case Review Groups have diarised meetings arranged between the standard monthly meetings. These only take place if a Rapid Review decision is required when the timescales dictate that the case cannot be managed at the planned monthly meetings.

4.4.2 The date of the Rapid Review meeting should be set as soon as the *Information Request Reply Template* has been sent out (see flowchart). The Rapid Review meeting should be scheduled **between 7 and 13 working days** of receiving the referral. This will allow for analysis of the submitted agency information 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.

4.5 Documentation

4.5.1 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, Department for Education and the National Panel in relation to the incident (if completed);
- a copy of the *Combined Summary for meeting* – this is the document used to collect all of the information together and to guide the Rapid Review meeting through the decision-making process.

4.5.2 Wherever possible the documentation will 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.

4.6 The Rapid Review Meeting

4.6.1 The meeting should include representatives from each of the Safeguarding Partners (the Clinical Commissioning Group, Police and Local Authority) and any other relevant agencies. It will only be quorate if at least three representatives from partner agencies, including at least two of the Safeguarding Partners are present.

4.6.2 The Rapid Review meeting should:

- review the facts about the case as presented in the documentation;
- discuss whether any immediate action is needed to ensure child(ren)'s and any other vulnerable person's safety;
- identify immediate learning that can be acted upon and agree how this will be shared (this may remove the need for further review);
- consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- make a decision if the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review are met. If the decision is to make a recommendation not to proceed with a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, because the criteria are not met, the meeting will consider whether an alternative form of learning review is appropriate.

4.6.3 Sections 2 and 3 of the *Combined Summary for meeting* should be completed and agreed at the Rapid Review meeting.

4.7 Independent Advice on Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Review decisions

4.7.1 The Independent Advisor will be sent the information regarding the Rapid Review and should attend the Rapid Review meeting.

4.7.2 Their role in the meeting will be to observe and then, when requested by the Chair of the Case Review Group, provide independent advice (including questions the meeting should consider) regarding:

- The decision as to whether to carry out a Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- Key areas to be considered in the review.

4.7.3 This allows the Independent Advisor to provide independent advice, being aware of the discussion that has taken place, but not unduly influencing the main consideration of the case by the meeting. It also minimises the need for further communication/discussion about the decision following the meeting.

4.7.4 **If the Independent Advisor is not available to attend the meeting**, they should provide their independent advice to the Business Office prior to the meeting regarding:

- Whether to carry out a Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- Key areas to be considered in the review / consideration of the case.

4.7.5 The Business Office will then feed this into the meeting when requested. The decision may also then need to be communicated to the Independent Advisor after the meeting (plus any rationale from the meeting) for advice regarding the decision made – which could require some further discussion with Safeguarding Partners.

4.8 Sharing the Outcome of the Rapid Review

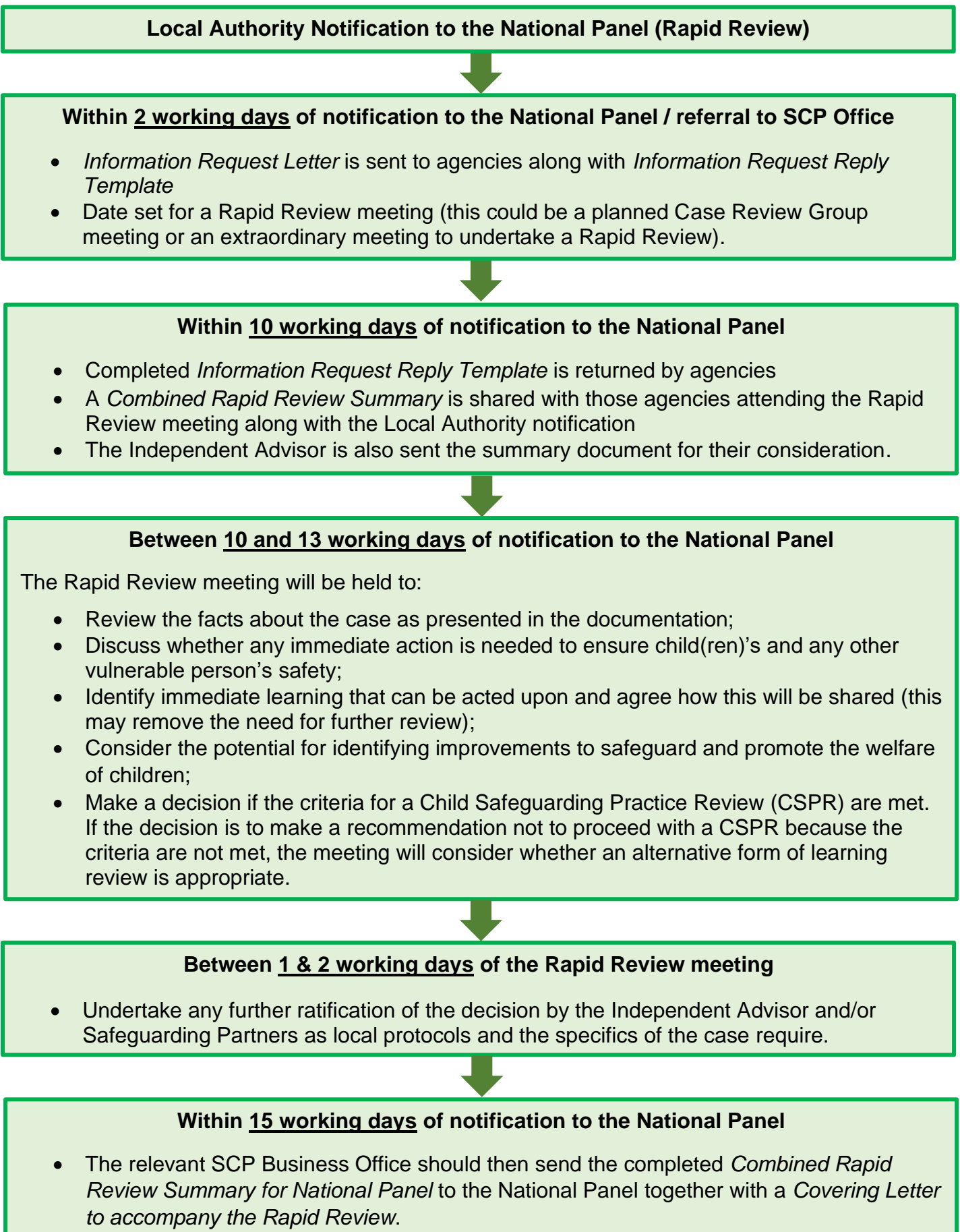
4.8.1 The relevant SCP Business Office should then send the completed *Combined Summary for National Panel* to the National Panel (Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk) together with a covering letter.

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

4.8.3 Individual agencies should notify their own inspectorate bodies as required.

4.9 Flowchart of the Process to decide whether to commission a Child Safeguarding Practice Review and the associated timescales

Local Authority Notification to the National Panel (Rapid Review)



Referral from an Agency (No Rapid Review)

**Agency submits a CSPR referral form to the relevant SCP office
(No Local Authority Notification made to the National Panel)**



Within one month of receiving the referral

- The referral is initially discussed at the first scheduled Case Review Group meeting after the referral has been received
- If it is considered that it might meet the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), an *Information Request Letter* is sent to agencies along with *Information Request Reply Template*.



Within two months of receiving the referral

- All agency replies are collated to produce the *Combined Summary* for the next scheduled Case Review Group meeting
- At the next scheduled Case Review Group meeting, the group considers the case as a potential Child Safeguarding Practice Review using the same criteria that a Rapid Review would apply
- If the decision is made that the case meets the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, the relevant SCP Business Office should then send the completed *Combined Summary for National Panel* to the National Panel together with a *Covering Letter* and the process for conducting a Child Safeguarding Practice Review is followed.

5. Agreeing the Scope and Terms of Reference

5.1 Developing the Terms of Reference

- 5.1.1 The development of the Terms of reference (TORs) will be dependent on the specific methodology employed to review an individual case. The Case Review Group should have an early input into the Terms of Reference and the Independent Advisor may have specific issues they want to include in the Terms of Reference.
- 5.1.2 If a Case Review Panel is set up to manage the specific review they will have the responsibility of completing the Terms of Reference at an early stage of their first meeting. In order to do this, they may wish to make use of the *Terms of Reference Template* and will need to consider the following. If an Independent Reviewer is commissioned, they will also be involved in the development of the Terms of Reference. Any issues raised by the Case Review Panel or Independent Reviewer that cannot be resolved will be referred to the Case Review Group for a decision.
- 5.1.3 The Case Review Group will formally agree the scope and Terms of Reference for the review.

5.2 Scoping Period

- 5.2.1 The scoping period covered by the review should reflect the potential learning likely to be achieved. (There is little value in identifying weaknesses in professional practice or procedures that have already changed). It should, therefore, be as short and as recent as possible. This, however, needs to be balanced against the need to understand the pattern of child abuse or neglect and whether early help interventions could have been beneficial.

5.3 Focus of the Review

- 5.3.1 The Rapid Review is likely to identify the key lines of enquiry to be explored as part of the review. These will be confirmed and formally identified in the Terms of Reference. These may, however, be revised as more information becomes available. Any significant changes should be formally approved by the Case Review Group.

5.4 Methodology

- 5.4.1 Each case will be examined individually, and the methodology will be adapted to meet the specific needs of the case.
- 5.4.2 The Terms of Reference will specify the information collection and collation tools that will be used in the review. This may include Chronologies (of Key Events and/or organisational changes), Information Reports or a combination of these (see Section 8.2).

5.5 Engaging Children and Family Members

- 5.5.1 Using the information available, and the genogram where available (see Section 7), consideration will be given to which family members are relevant to the review and how the family, siblings and the child (where the review does not involve a death) should be invited to contribute.
- 5.5.2 The information and support that children and family members are likely to require to effectively engage will also be identified.
- 5.5.3 Plans to engage children and family members will need to take into account any parallel investigations.

5.6 Parallel Investigations

5.6.1 The case may also be subject to a criminal or coroner's investigation, individual agency or professional body disciplinary procedures, and/or another type of formal review.⁸ It is anticipated that a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review will go ahead unless there are clear reasons not to. Identifying and responding to learning in a timely manner is important and supports a more effective review.

5.6.2 Under *Working Together 2018* there is greater discretion as to when a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review should take place and who does it. This enables greater flexibility in designing the right review methodology whilst meeting statutory obligations. Where there are parallel investigations, this is best considered at the scoping stage to reduce duplication and the impact on children and families and maximise learning.

5.7 Legal Advice

5.7.1 Consideration will be given to whether legal advice will be required at the outset or during the review.

5.8 Timetable

5.8.1 Taking into account the factors summarised above, the timetable for the review will be agreed. This will include the timing of Case Review Panel meetings, Learning Events and engagement with families.

6. Appointing the Independent Reviewer and Case Review Panel

6.1 The Independent Reviewer

6.1.1 Dependent on the methodology used to undertake a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, an Independent Reviewer may be appointed to manage the review process, chair meetings of the Case Review Panel, facilitate the Learning Workshops and author the final report.

6.1.2 The Safeguarding Children Partnership will inform the National Panel of the name of any reviewer commissioned via email to:

- Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk
- SCR.SIN@ofsted.gov.uk
- Mailbox.CPOD@education.gov.uk

6.2 The Case Review Panel

6.2.1 Where appropriate a small, multi-agency Case Review Panel will be established to oversee each review. This will include a representative from each of the Safeguarding Partners along with representatives of any other multi-agency partners. Other relevant subject matter experts may be included depending on the case.

6.2.2 The Case Review Panel will support the Independent Reviewer in quality assuring agency Information Reports and facilitating Learning Workshops. The Panel will also provide local context and challenge to the analysis of professional practice and the identification of learning.

6.2.3 The Police representative will be responsible for liaising with the Senior Investigating Officer, Crown Prosecution Service, and for co-ordination of family liaison.

⁸ For example, Domestic Homicide Reviews, multi-agency public protection arrangement reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews or health 'serious untoward incident' processes.

7. Engaging Children and Family Members

7.1 Approach and Principles

- 7.1.1 *Working Together 2018* highlights the crucial importance of inviting families, including surviving children, to contribute to reviews. This will help ensure that the review reflects the child's perspective and the family context.
- 7.1.2 In line with good practice,⁹ consideration will be given to how family members can be supported to engage. This may include interpretation and translation support if English is not a first language, additional support for disabled parents, specialist support where there are issues of domestic abuse, and drawing on expertise to facilitate the appropriate involvement of children.
- 7.1.3 Family engagement will be included as a standing item at all Case Review Panel meetings. The Panel will also identify an individual who will take responsibility for co-ordinating communication with family members.

7.2 Identifying the Family Network

- 7.2.1 The lead agency working with the child/family will usually be asked to prepare a full and accurate **genogram** to assist the clarification of family relationships and dynamics. This will be shared with other agencies at Panel meetings and in the Reflective Learning Workshop (see Section 8.9) and will be updated based on any additional information on the family provided by these agencies. The genogram will not be included in the final published report.

7.3 Making Initial Contact with the Family

- 7.3.1 Family members, including surviving children, will be informed of the review and invited to contribute unless there is a strong reason not to do so. The initial planning meeting (described under Section 5) will discuss family involvement and agree an approach that will sensitively manage their expectations and ensure they understand the process.
- 7.3.2 Personal contact should be made whenever possible by the most appropriate practitioner and the family provided with a letter (signed for or hand delivered by an appropriate practitioner such as the social worker) and/or leaflet to explain and introduce the process and Independent Reviewer.

7.4 Conversations with Family Members

- 7.4.1 Family engagement will normally be led by the Independent Reviewer and conversations should ideally take place before the Learning Event (described in Section 8.9) so that the family's views can be included alongside the analysis of practice.
- 7.4.2 It is recognised that family members may decide not to take part in the review. All reasons for non-involvement of family members (for example, parallel investigations or the choice of the individual) will be documented in the final report.

8. Methodology

8.1 The 'Systems Methodology' and Expectations of Agencies

- 8.1.1 *Working Together 2018* does not specify the methodology that should be used in local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews but there is an explicit expectation that '*principles of the*

⁹ This includes, but is not limited to, the SCIE / NSPCC Quality Marker 4 on Informing the Family and Quality Marker 12 on Family Involvement.

systems methodology recommended by the Munro Report will be 'taken into account' by the Safeguarding Partners and other partner agencies when agreeing the method by which the review will be conducted.

- 8.1.2 This section describes the systems-based approach. This is consistent with both the guidance in *Working Together 2018* and the principles of the systems methodology recommended by the Munro Report.¹⁰
- 8.1.3 Each case will be examined individually and the methodology may be adapted to meet the specific needs of the case, to ensure a proportionate response, and to maximise learning to improve both frontline safeguarding practice and organisational structures. For some cases, the Safeguarding Partners and other partner agencies may agree to use a different methodology.

8.2 Agency Action and Expectations

- 8.2.1 All agencies which provided services to the family during the time period specified in the Terms of Reference will be formally requested to participate in the review process. The extent of agency engagement will be dependent on the type of review commissioned, the specific Terms of Reference and methodology chosen.
- 8.2.2 Each organisation should have an identified Safeguarding Lead to act as a single point of contact for the co-ordination and support of the review process.
- 8.2.3 Agencies should ensure that all requests for information are acted upon in a timely fashion and practitioners are released to participate in the review. Agencies should also provide support to their staff who are affected by the case where required.

8.3 Information Collection and Collation

- 8.3.1 The Terms of Reference will specify the information collection and collation tools that will be used in the review. Information will usually be collected using chronologies and Information Reports.

8.4 Chronologies

- 8.4.1 Where chronologies are used, all relevant agencies will be asked to complete a chronology of their agency's involvement in relation to significant events that are relevant to the case. They may also be asked to produce a chronology of any organisational changes which may have impacted on frontline practice during the same period. If required, chronologies can include columns to provide analysis of individual events, including if an agency's response to an event was expected practice.
- 8.4.2 Agencies will be sent a *Chronology Template and Accompanying Letter*, along with *Guidance on Completing the Chronologies*.
- 8.4.3 Individual agency chronologies will be collated to produce a Multi-Agency Chronology.

8.5 Information Reports

- 8.5.1 Information Reports will be requested from agencies where required in order to analyse the agency's involvement with the child and family and any themes that have emerged. The report should be focused on systems learning and outline any potential learning for the

¹⁰ The systems approach described in this guidance was developed based on the model described in SCIE Guide 24: *'Learning together to safeguard children: developing a multi-agency systems approach for case reviews'* by Dr Shelia Fish, Dr Eileen Munro and Sue Bairstow (January 2009) and following research into best practice around Serious Case Reviews.

agency and for multi-agency arrangements and should include information about actions already undertaken.

8.5.2 Agencies will be sent an *Information Report Template* and *Accompanying Letter*, along with *Guidance on Completing an Information Report*.

8.6 Factual Summaries

8.6.1 If an agency / organisation has had contact with a subject of a Child Safeguarding Practice Review or their family, but their involvement was limited, and no significant incidents have taken place during their contact or as a result of their contact, they may be asked to complete a Factual Summary. This sets out their agency / organisation's involvement without requiring any analysis of the agency's involvement.

8.7 Quality Assurance of Agency Submissions

8.7.1 The Case Review Panel, chaired by the Independent Reviewer, needs to be satisfied that the appropriate level of information has been provided by each agency and that the analysis provides sufficient insight into the actions undertaken by the agency and possible learning.

8.7.2 If necessary, the Panel may decide to either request more information from an individual agency or invite them to attend a meeting if further clarity is needed about their agency's role with the child and/or family.

8.8 Establishing Key Themes

8.8.1 Using the chronologies and/or analysis in the Information Reports, the Panel will discuss the case in detail and develop the **Key Themes for Analysis**. These should be as few as practicable and focus on core learning. The key themes should identify issues of practice that have emerged within the case which can (i) be transposed into working with families more generally and (ii) give insight into the systems which operate formally or informally within safeguarding practice. Some examples might be "making space and time for children" or "the use of assessments to inform future interventions".

8.8.2 The Key Themes for Analysis may be shared with participants prior to their attendance at the Reflective Learning Workshop (Section 8.9).

8.9 Reflective Learning Workshop

8.9.1 Reflective Learning Workshops provide a forum for practitioners involved in the case and their Line Managers to come together in a respectful, positive and supportive environment to consider the circumstances surrounding the case and the reasons why actions were taken. This enables the Independent Reviewer and Panel to explore factors influencing workers working with the family at the time, their decisions and identify important multi-agency learning.

8.9.2 A Reflective Learning Workshop will not be suitable for all reviews. In some cases, the key individuals who had worked with children and families will have left the agencies that they had been employed by at the time of their involvement with a case.

8.10 Preparing for the Learning Workshop

8.10.1 The Panel will need to ensure it has a list of appropriate practitioners and their Line Managers to invite to the Learning Workshop. This will usually be requested alongside the chronology and/or Information Report.

8.10.2 To maximise learning all agencies are expected to ensure that appropriate staff attend the workshop. However, **only those who have had some form of direct operational involvement with the child and family should attend.**

8.10.3 An *Invitation to the Reflective Learning Workshop* will be sent to all participants giving plenty of notice. This will be accompanied by a short briefing which explains the purpose of the event and the importance of attending.

8.11 The Structure of the Learning Workshop

8.11.1 The Reflective Learning Workshop will normally be **undertaken over half a day**, although a more complex case may require an additional half day.

8.11.2 The Independent Reviewer will normally facilitate the Reflective Learning Workshop, supported by members of the Panel.

8.11.3 The structure of the Workshop will vary depending on the case but is likely to include a discussion of:

- the information compiled about the family in terms of incidents and professional interventions with an opportunity for participants to query the factual accuracy, to add information and to agree changes;
- the “lived experience of the child/children”. This enables participants to view what happened from the child’s perspective;¹¹
- the reasons why events and practice happened the way they did, including any organisational and ‘systems’ factors that may have shaped behaviour (such as organisational/team aims or culture, levels of supervision, or the resources available to deliver services);
- the key themes which have emerged in the case and whether they can be transposed to working with families more generally; and
- any examples of good practice, the learning from the case and actions that should be taken to better safeguard children in the future.

8.11.4 Within these discussions it is essential that all actions and decisions (or lack of them) by professionals are viewed within the context of the information available at the time and system in which they were working.

8.11.5 The Independent Reviewer will assist the group to avoid hindsight bias in their consideration of what took place.

8.12 Conversations with Key Practitioners

8.12.1 Where an individual with important information to contribute to the review is unable to participate in a Reflective Learning Workshop, arrangements may be made to facilitate a conversation with the Independent Reviewer to enable them to contribute to the learning.

8.13 Practitioner Feedback Event

8.13.1 Practitioners who have participated in the review may be invited to a feedback session towards the end of the process. The Independent Reviewer / Case Review Panel will share the learning that has been identified and provide practitioners with an opportunity to

¹¹ As outlined under section 7, this is an important requirement of *Working Together 2018* as well as good practice in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

comment on the accuracy of the analysis before the review report is finalised. Practitioners may also be invited to consider how learning can be transposed into practice on a day-to-day basis and practical issues around the implementation of possible improvements.

9. The Report

9.1 The Report

9.1.1 It is expected that reports will be published so the Independent Reviewer should draft the formal report with publication of the report in mind.

9.1.2 Reports should meet any requirements specified in the agreed Terms of Reference for the review and, as a minimum, should also succinctly include:

- a brief overview of what happened and the key circumstances, background and context of the case. This should be concise but sufficient to understand the context for the learning and recommendations;
- a summary of why relevant decisions by professionals were taken;
- a critique of how agencies worked together and any shortcomings in this;
- whether any shortcomings identified are features of practice in general;
- what would need to be done differently to prevent harm occurring to a child in similar circumstances;
- examples of good practice; and,
- what needs to happen to ensure that agencies learn from this case.

9.1.3 Reports should be written in a way that avoids harming the welfare of any children or vulnerable adults in the case. Information should be appropriately anonymised and very intimate and personal detail of the family's life should be kept to a minimum to reduce the sensitivity of publication.

9.1.4 The Case Review Panel will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the draft report has met the agreed Terms of Reference, is succinct and focused on improving local safeguarding arrangements.

9.1.5 The final report must be formally approved by the relevant Case Review Group followed by the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

9.2 Developing the Learning Points and Recommendations

9.2.1 The analysis of the information collected during the review, coupled with the feedback from a Reflective Learning Workshop should lead to the identification of key learning in the form of specific learning points identified in the report.

9.2.2 These learning points may be developed into formal recommendations that will form part of the final report. The Safeguarding Children Partnership may choose to convene a dedicated group to consider the learning and how this can be developed into meaningful actions.

9.2.3 In some cases, the Safeguarding Children Partnership may decide at the outset of a review that the identified learning points in the report will be considered by a separate group who will identify what action needs to be taken to address a specific learning point.

9.2.4 Whichever approach is taken, the Safeguarding Children Partnership will be able to engage key strategic stakeholders and consider the potential learning in the context of wider operational and strategic developments: this will ensure that actions are focused on the issues that will make a real difference and, therefore, maximise the opportunity to deliver meaningful change.

9.2.5 In all cases, learning will be focused on improving outcomes for children and should be clear about what is required of relevant agencies and others collectively and individually, and by when.

10. Publication

10.1 Requirements

10.1.1 The Safeguarding Partnership is required to publish the reports of local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, unless they consider it inappropriate to do so.¹²

10.2 Preparing for Publication

10.2.1 Publication and media planning will commence as soon as the final draft report has been formally endorsed by the Case Review Group. Publication planning will include strategic leads from all the agencies involved in the review and their media/communication leads.

10.3 Managing the Impact of Publication

10.3.1 Consideration will be given to how best to manage the impact of the publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case.

10.3.2 The wishes of the child's family will be considered as part of the publication and media planning. The proposed publication arrangements will then be discussed with the family and appropriate steps will be taken to minimise the disruption and distress that any media attention surrounding the publication may cause to family and friends.

10.3.3 The arrangements for informing practitioners will also be considered. It is likely that the senior managers from each agency will take responsibility for informing frontline staff of the date of publication and ensuring they have appropriate support.

10.4 Media Strategy

10.4.1 A central point of contact for media enquiries should be identified. This individual can coordinate media enquiries during the publication phase and ensure effective liaison is maintained with each organisation's strategic and media leads.

10.5 Formal Publication

10.5.1 The Safeguarding Children Partnership must send a copy of the full report to the National Panel, Ofsted and to the Department of Education no later than **seven working days before the date of publication**. Reports should be submitted electronically to:

- Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk
- SCR.SIN@ofsted.gov.uk
- Mailbox.CPOD@education.gov.uk

10.5.2 Published reports will always include the name of the reviewer(s) and will be made available to read and download from the appropriate Safeguarding Children Partnership website, unless these are published anonymously. Reports will be publicly available for **at least one year**. Archived reports will be available on request from the Safeguarding Children Partnership, through the relevant Business Office.

¹² If they consider it inappropriate to publish the report, they must publish any information about the improvements that could be made following the review.

10.5.3 Published reports will also be submitted for inclusion in the NSPCC National Repository of Safeguarding Case Reviews. Reports will be submitted by email to: information@nspcc.org.uk

11. Embedding Learning

11.1 Purpose

11.1.1 The purpose of a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review is to identify improvements that can be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Disseminating and embedding the learning is, therefore, crucial.

11.2 Capturing improvements and Taking Corrective Action while the Review is in Progress

11.2.1 The Panel will consider at every meeting whether any immediate single or multi-agency action is required to respond to emerging issues identified through the review process.¹³ They may wish to deliver swift messages to the workforce in specific agencies or disseminate multi-agency learning to a wider workforce. In so doing, the Panel will consider what information is shared and whether this will have an impact on family members or any parallel investigations.

11.3 Disseminating and Sharing Learning from the Review

11.3.1 The relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership will be responsible for ensuring the identified improvements are implemented locally, including the way in which organisations and agencies work together.

11.3.2 A clear plan for disseminating and sharing the learning from the review with all relevant agencies will be developed. This may include organising single or multi-agency meetings or producing briefing notes on the lessons learned for use in agency team meetings and/or supervision sessions.

11.3.3 It is the responsibility of the agencies who have participated in the review to ensure their agency recommendations are fully implemented and used to make improvements to their safeguarding children arrangements and information on this and the impact of improvement is reported to the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

11.4 Monitoring Progress

11.4.1 The local safeguarding arrangements will regularly audit progress on the implementation of recommended improvements and will regularly monitor and follow up actions to ensure improvement is sustained.

11.5 Taking into Account Learning from National Reviews

11.5.1 The Case Review Group of the Safeguarding Children Partnership will also review the learning from all national reviews and consider how it can be applied at a local level.

¹³ This ensures compliance with *Working Together 2018* which requires that 'every effort should be made, both before the review and while it is in progress to (i) capture points from the case about improvements needed, and (ii) take correction action and disseminate learning.'

This document has been produced for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland based on the existing West Midlands Regional Framework and Practice Guidance for LCSPRs.

It has been adapted with the kind permission of Simon Cross on behalf of the Birmingham Children's Trust.