

NSCP AND GSCP LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT REVIEWING PATHWAYS

PART ONE: Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Notifications

“The purpose of serious child safeguarding reviews, at local and national level is to identify improvements that can be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Reviews should seek to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. They are not conducted to hold individuals, organisations, or agencies to account.

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the panel) and at a local level with the safeguarding partners”.

Working Together 2023

Determination of a Serious Child Safeguarding Incident

A Serious Child Safeguarding Incident ¹(SCSI) occurs when:

- a) abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected
- and*
- b) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the Local Authority’s area or is normally resident in the Local Authority’s area but harmed outside England.

What is abuse or neglect?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines **abuse** as:

“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.”

Further detail can be accessed: [Glossary: Abuse \(workingtogetheronline.co.uk\)](https://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/glossary/abuse)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines **neglect** as:

“The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development.”

Further detail can be accessed: [Glossary: Neglect \(workingtogetheronline.co.uk\)](https://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/glossary/neglect)

See also [Learning Reviews Guidance for Safeguarding Partners](#) & [Case Review Group Guidance](#)

¹ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (See P.132 para 329)

What does serious harm mean?

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines serious harm as that which:

“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, judgement should be exercised in cases where impairment is likely to be long term, even if this is not immediately certain. Even if a child recovers, including from a one-off incident, serious harm may still have occurred”.

In addition to the definition within Working Together 2023 additional definitions of serious harm include:

“Serious harm” means death or serious personal injury, whether physical or psychological (Section 224, Criminal Justice Act 2003)

The Local Authority has a duty to notify the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel (National Panel) **within 5 working days** of becoming aware of an incident that meets the criteria for an SCSI.

The Local Authority has a separate duty to notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, and the death of any care leaver up to and including the age of 24. The death of a care leaver or a child in care does not require a rapid review or local child safeguarding practice review. However, local partners may wish to undertake a local child safeguarding practice review in circumstances where the criteria are not met, if it is identified there, is local learning.

In addition, the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) has a duty to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases, which, in their view, raise issues of importance in relation to the local area.

Referral Pathway

If any practitioner has information which they feel may meet criteria for a Serious Child Safeguarding Incident (SCSI) they should discuss whether circumstances meet the criteria with their organisation’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - or Line Manager in absence of DSL - no more than 48hrs after becoming aware of the incident.

If the organisation's DSL agrees, they should arrange for a prompt referral to be made using the **Form A - Referral** to the relevant Business Manager:

- For Newcastle: safeguardingboards@newcastle.gov.uk
- or**
- For Gateshead: SafeguardingBoardsBusinessUnit@Gateshead.Gov.UK

On receipt of the referral the Safeguarding Partnership Business Manager will notify statutory partners and convene the Local Case Review Group (LCRG) to review the referral and determine next steps using **Form B** as the meeting agenda.

Notification Decision Making:

LCRG members from each statutory partner must convene to review the information in the referral and supporting and/or relevant information available to partners **within 2 days of receipt of referral**.

The LCRG Chair will ensure the rationale for any decision making is recorded using [Form C](#)

LCRG Membership:

GSCP	NSCP
Deputy Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Lifelong Learning, Gateshead Council – Chair of Gateshead LCRG	Lead Assistant Director: Children's Social Care & Early Help, Newcastle City Council- Chair of Newcastle LCRG
Designated Nurse for Children's Safeguarding, Northeast, and North Cumbria (ICB)	Designated Nurse for Children's Safeguarding, Northeast, and North Cumbria (ICB)
Detective Chief Inspector Safeguarding, Northumbria Police	Detective Chief Inspector Safeguarding, Northumbria Police
Business Manager, GSCP	Business Manager, NSCP

Where Notification and Rapid Review are proposed the group will identify:

- Information that supports the determination
- Agree the draft notification to the National Panel
- Consider whether relevant family members should be notified of a notification to the National Panel or contact deferred, and who is lead for family engagement (particularly relevant if criminal investigations are underway).
- Identification of key organisations for Initial Scoping Information and involvement in a Rapid Review
- Identification of core questions for all organisations for an Initial Rapid Review meeting using [Form D](#)

In cases where the LCRG group determine that the criteria for an SCSi is met the LCRG Chair will organise the submission of the determination and supporting information, to the local authority Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP). The Business Manager will notify the Partnership Chair, remaining statutory partner DSPs and the Independent Scrutineer.

The statutory partner DSP's agreement and proposed next steps must be received prior to any further action.

In cases where all DSPs agrees with the determination by the LCRG, the Business Manager will complete the Child Safeguarding Incident Notification using the online Child safeguarding incident notification system and update the LCRG and named leads.

Though the responsibility to notify rests on the local authority, it is for all three safeguarding partners to agree which incidents should be notified in their local area. Where there is disagreement, the local dispute resolution process followed.

The referring Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or practitioner will be informed of the outcome of the decision at the earliest opportunity.

Rapid Review:

The safeguarding partners are required to undertake a rapid review of the case and submit the rapid review to the Panel within **15 working days** of notification to the National Panel by the local authority.

The Chair of the LCRG will lead the Rapid Review. The Business Manager is responsible for the co-ordination of the schedule and preparation of documentation, supported by the Partnership Business Team.

See [Schedule for Stages of 15-day Rapid Review](#) for Rapid Review pathway and timescales.

The purpose of the Rapid Review is to:

- *Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established at the time by contacting local organisations 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 to undertake a child safeguarding practice review.*

Working Together 2023

Initial Scoping:

All relevant organisations who have (or had) involvement with the child (children) or family will be required to contribute to a Rapid Review. The purpose of the initial scoping and information sharing is to gather the specific facts about the case, including determining the extent of organisation involvement with the child (children) and family.

Organisations should appoint managers with the required expertise to lead involvement in the Rapid Review and secure any relevant records/files in a secure place and keep a copy of the reports they submit to the Rapid Review Process as they may be required to provide more detailed information if a national or local safeguarding practice review is subsequently commissioned.

The Business Manager will circulate the request for Rapid Review Information Sharing and Scoping Report [Form D](#) as agreed by the LCRG, **within two days** of receipt of notification to the national panel.

Organisations should prioritise completion of the Form D and return **within five working days** of receipt to the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership:

Newcastle: safeguardingboards@newcastle.gov.uk

or

Gateshead: SafeguardingBoardsBusinessUnit@Gateshead.Gov.UK

The Business Manager will prepare a combined document in advance of the Initial Rapid Review Meeting. The information will be shared securely by the Business Manager with identified organisation leads involved in the meeting through [Form E](#)

Initial Rapid Review Meeting:

LCRG Members and relevant organisation leads will meet to conduct the Initial Rapid Review **between seven and thirteen working days** from notification to the National Panel. The LCRG Chair will lead the meeting, supported by the Business Manager.

The following documents will be shared with all those involved in the meeting:

- Any referral to that initiated the procedure. (**Form A**)
- Serious Incident Notification (**Form C**)
- Copies of the combined Rapid Review (**Form E**)
- Other relevant information (e.g. Child Death Review Rapid Response Meeting minutes)

The meeting will convene using [Form F](#) as the agenda template and [Form G](#) as the template for recording the meeting and decisions. The meeting will:

- Review actions taken since the notification and identify, agree, and progress any additional action required to ensure the safety of children and young people.
- Identify any immediate procedural and/or practice issues that need strengthening as a priority and progress appropriate action.
- Outline a concise summary of the facts, so far as they can be ascertained, about the serious incident and relevant context. This should give sufficient detail to underpin the analysis but does not require lengthy detailed chronologies of organisation involvement that can obscure the pertinent facts.
- Analyse the information and determine whether to recommend a National or Local Child Safeguarding Review. In some cases, the Rapid Review may identify key local learning that can be quickly acted upon, removing the need for any further review. Options for further reviews are outlined on Form G.

Where relevant, further information and/or clarification will be sought from organisations. Further meetings can be held in support of developing a final draft review document, this may be particularly relevant in complex cases.

After the final Rapid Review meeting the Business Manager and LCRG Chair will prepare Form G for submission to the National Panel, and this will be shared with review group for consultation. The Form G will be submitted by the Business Manager to the DSPs (including Partnership Chair), and Independent Scrutineer for agreement prior to submission to the Panel.

Submission of Rapid Review to National Panel:

When the Form G has been endorsed by the DSPs, the Business Manager will arrange the submission to the [National Panel](#)² If the DSPs recommendation is to progress with a further learning review the Chair of the LCRG will begin instigate the next steps (see **Part Two**).

² mailbox.nationalreviewpanel@education.gov.uk

Response from National Panel:

Upon receipt of the National Panel's response, the Business Manager will notify the Chair of the LCRG, together with the DSP's, Partnership Chair and Independent Scrutineer who will review the Panel response and determine next steps. A meeting of the LCRG will take place. The Group will use [Form H](#) (agenda) and [Form I](#) (record of the meeting) to review the response and outline next steps. The LCRG will submit Form I (record of the meeting) to the LCRG for further action and oversight which will include a response to the National Panel as required.

In cases where further learning activity is identified, please refer to [Part Three](#) of this pathway.

In concluding a Rapid Review, the outcome of the review will be communicated to:

- The family via the lead organisation (in line with plan agreed at Rapid Review)
- The original referrer
- Organisations involved in the Rapid Review Meeting(s)
- The Chair of the Learning and Improvement Subgroup

Dispute Resolution:

The Business Manager will ensure that the DSPs have oversight of all communication and responses to and from the National Panel and have oversight of any learning activity in relation to recommendations.

The LCRG Chair and/or Business Manager will promptly utilise the partnership escalation procedure to raise areas of dispute and/or organisational response or involvement with the DSPs.

Schedule for Stages of 15-day Rapid Review

Day (Subject to Change)	Date	Action
Pre-Planning	Within five working days of referral	Upon receipt of Referral (FORM A) and/or alert by LCRG Member to the Business Manager. LCRG Chair notified and meeting of LCRG Members takes place (FORM B). LCRG Members agree and record decision making (FORM C) including: • Draft Notification to National Panel • Plan for family engagement and lead organisation. • Identification of key organisations to be involved in Rapid Review • Identify core questions for Rapid Review Form (FORM D) Business Manager submits to statutory partner DSPs for authorisation and where relevant completes submission. Copies are shared with the Partnership Chair and Independent Scrutineer.

Phase One: Initial Phase (Assessment)

Day	Date	Action
Day 1		Business Manager notifies the National Panel and circulates to DSPs, Partnership Chair, Independent Scrutineer, and LCRG a copy of the Notification. Business Manager circulates accompanying letter to organisations and request for Rapid Review Information Sharing and Scoping Report (FORM D) to identified organisations for completion with deadline. (Additional participants must only be invited by Business Manager as agreed by the LCRG Chair)
Day 2 – 5		LCRG Members and additional SCP partner leads responsible for gathering organisation information return FORM D to the relevant safeguarding children partnership: Newcastle: safeguardingboards@newcastle.gov.uk or Gateshead: safeguardingBoardsBusinessUnit@Gateshead.Gov.uk

Day	Date	Action
Day 5		Collation of information from LCRG Members and any additional SCP partner leads by Business Manager
Day 6		Business Manager to securely share collated Agency Rapid Review Forms (FORM E) to LCRG Chair and Members and any additional identified participants for information prior to Rapid Review Meeting

Phase Two: Rapid Review (Rapid Review Meeting)

Day	Date	Action
Day 7		Rapid Review Meeting takes place using FORM F as agenda. Rapid Review Meeting Group – Will include LCRG Members and identified SCP partner leads who represent their organisation at the Rapid Review Meeting (Additional participants must only be invited by the Business Manager– as agreed by the LCRG Chair). Other professionals may be co-opted if required. Rapid Review meeting to discuss and identify lead manager as contact point with family and consider notification and involvement of family.
Day 7 – 9		Post Rapid Review meeting – LCRG Chair/Business Manager and other agreed parties to develop the draft Rapid Review and Recommendations.
Day 9		The Business Manager securely shares draft Rapid Review Report (FORM G) following Initial Rapid Review Meeting to the group for comments and amendments.

Day 10		A further Rapid Review Meeting will be organised (if required) – for example complex case or further clarification needed. Rapid Review Meeting Group – Will include LCRG Members who represent their organisation at the Rapid Review Meeting. (Additional participants must only be invited by the Business Manager – as agreed by the LCRG Chair). Other professionals may be co-opted if required.
Day 11 – 13		The LCRG Chair and Business Manager will finalise Draft Rapid Review Report and Recommendations
Day 13 – 14		The Business Manager will submit to DSPs for endorsement. Copies will be shared with the Partnership Chair and Independent Scrutineer.
Day 15		On authorisation by the DSP statutory leads the Business Manager will submit the Rapid Review to the Child Safeguarding Review National Panel and notify the LCRG Chair.
Day 1 – 15		The LCRG Chair or Business Manager will promptly utilise the partnership escalation procedure to raise areas of dispute and/or organisational response or involvement with the DSPs.

Phase Three: Post Response from National Panel

Day	Date	Action
Post Response		Child Safeguarding Review National Panel response received by Business Manager and circulated to DSPs, Partnership Chair, Independent Scrutineer and LCRG Chair to determine next steps. A meeting of the LCRG will take place. The Group will use Form H (agenda) and Form I (record of the meeting) to review the response and outline next steps. In concluding a Rapid Review, the outcome of the review will be communicated to • The family • The original referrer • Organisations involved in the Rapid Review pathway. • The Chair of the Learning and Improvement Subgroup