

NSCP AND GSCP LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT REVIEWING PACK

PART THREE: Options for Learning

In cases where a Rapid Review has been undertaken the learning activity will have been identified (see [Part One](#)). Upon conclusion of a Rapid Review, the Local Case Review Group (LCRG) may identify that all learning from the case has been identified and they may recommend that no further learning activity is required. In such cases, any agreed learning will be acted upon and disseminated in a timely manner across the partnership.

Not every case referred to the safeguarding partnership will lead to a Rapid Review as these are only held for cases that are identified as meeting the criteria or where there are lessons to be learned in respect of partner safeguarding practice. In such cases, the LCRG consisting of the three statutory partners, will consider all referrals and determine next steps.

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

Referral Pathway:

Please refer to [Part One](#) of this pathway for referrals that may meet the criteria for a Serious Safeguarding Incident.

For cases that are below the level for notification to the Panel as a serious incident, practitioners can submit referrals to the relevant Business Manager using the [FORM A](#) following agreement with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Manager. Practitioners and Managers can discuss cases with a LCRG member prior to doing so if they are uncertain whether it is appropriate to submit the referral.

Upon receipt of a referral the Business Manager will notify the LCRG members and convene a meeting of the LCRG where they will consider the information shared on the referral and decide whether a full review should be undertaken. In some cases, it may determine there are no immediate concerns, in which case the referral will be reviewed at the next Joint Case Review Group (JCRG).

The LCRG will consider alternative learning audit and assurance activity and in some cases, it may be appropriate to take no further action.

There may be occasions where a referral is received, and it is identified there is no requirement to conduct any learning review of the case. For example, there will be on occasions where the child and family were not known to services within a safeguarding context and there exists no information that indicates that services should have been involved. In these cases, there would be no safeguarding practice to review and learn from.

Where the issue relates to single organisation learning then the organisation may be asked to take forward an appropriate audit and report back their findings.

The most appropriate learning requirements will be determined based on the individual needs and proportionate for the learning involved. If there is a decision to review the case in full, this will be endorsed by the DSPs and the Business Manager will collect information from all agencies involved with the family via the [FORM B](#) which will include specific questions relevant to case learning. Once obtained, this information is combined and shared with the LCRG ahead of the full review of the case.

All referrals and ongoing learning activity from reviews will be monitored by the JCRG to ensure the learning process is timely and lessons learnt are cascaded across the partnership via the local Safeguarding Partnership Learning and Improvement Group.

Key learning activity that can be undertaken by the partnership includes:

- Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews
- Multi Agency Learning Reviews
- Single Agency Learning Reviews
- Audit Activity
- Bespoke Learning Events
- Development of Learning Material

For further details, please refer to [the joint partnership learning framework](#).

The local partnership escalation process can be utilised by any organisation to raise issues or concerns relating to specific cases managed through this pathway. In the first instance, concerns should be raised with the relevant Business Manager/LCRG Chair.

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

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR):

The partnership is required to identify improvements that can be made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Learning is relevant locally but can have wider importance.

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

Safeguarding partners must:

- Identify serious child safeguarding cases that raise issues of importance in relation to their area.
- Commission and oversee the review of those cases if they consider review appropriate.

The criteria safeguarding partners must take into account include 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 the panel has considered and has concluded a local review may be more appropriate.

Working Together 2023

In decision making as to the requirement of an LCSPR, the LCRG will also have regard to the following circumstances:

- Where the safeguarding partners have cause for concern about actions of a single agency
- 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 ICB is involved, including in cases where families have moved around.
- Where cases may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings

Meeting the criteria does not mean that safeguarding partners must automatically carry out a local LCSPR. The LCRGG will consider whether the learning identified is already known about and whether changes in practice have already been highlighted and actioned, in which case it may be recommended that it is not necessary to carry out a review. Conversely

some cases may not meet the definition of a “serious child safeguarding case” but nevertheless raise issues of importance to the local area, for example, a good practice learning opportunity, or where there has been a “near-miss” incident, in which case the LCRG may choose to recommend an LCSPR is undertaken.

All decisions on whether to undertake an LCSPR review will be made transparently and recorded within the LCRG meeting records and agreed by the DSPs. The decisions will be communicated appropriately with wider partners, including with involved families.

Working Together 2023 offers clear guidance on expectations and timescales for reviews. The expectation is that learning is available no later than 6 months after the decision to initiate a review. This is to ensure that all learning remains relevant to current practice. Therefore, the LCRG will endeavour to produce a concluded review within 6 months.

There may be challenges to this, such as ongoing criminal proceedings or coronial processes. **In such cases the LCRG Chair will seek the advice of and involvement of the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) for the Police and/or Coronial leads in decision making.** Any steps will be taken to share information and continue the review as far as is possible without undermining other processes nor limiting the review. Any early identified actions will be agreed and commenced without delay where service and multi-agency practice can be improved.

Conducting The Review:

The LCRG will undertake an LCSPR on behalf of the DSPs and have delegated authority to oversee the progress of a review.

Once a decision has been made to conduct a review, the LCRG Chair and members of the LCRG are responsible for agreeing the scope of the review and preparing a Terms of reference (TOR) which should be proportionate to the circumstances of the case. The TOR may need to be revisited by the LCRG Chair and Group as the review progresses and as new information is identified. As part of the TOR, the LCRG Chair will co-opt lead individuals and/or organisations to be involved in the LCSPR Review. The TOR will outline the designated lead to undertake direct work with child and/or family members and outline the plan for child and/or family involvement in the LCSPR.

In line with Working Together 2023 the LCRG will consider the need for an Independent Chair for an LCSPR. This will depend on the complexity of the case, the review model identified, and methodology selected, together with other local considerations. Where the LCRG determine there is a requirement to appoint an Independent Chair/Author to the review, this will be referred to the statutory DSPs for consideration. If an Independent Chair/Author is required by the DSPs, the Business Manager will discuss with and seek advice from the National Panel (in line with Working Together 2023 requirements). In such cases the LCRG will recommend an Independent Chair/Author to the DSP Executive Group and will consider:

In all cases they should consider whether the reviewer has:

- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to local child safeguarding practice reviews, including the ability to engage with practitioners, 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.
- The ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals, organisations or agencies involved at the time rather than using hindsight.
- The ability to communicate findings effectively.
- Any real or perceived conflict of interest

[Working Together 2023](#)

Where there is no requirement for an Independent Chair/Author, there may be occasions when the LCRG Chair is unable to Chair an LCSPR (for example where they have had direct involvement in the management of the case. In such circumstances an LCSPR Chair will be identified and appointed to lead the review, agreed by the statutory DSPs.

Where there are ongoing criminal or coronial procedures, the Police Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) and/or Coroner's Office will be invited to be represented at LCSPR meetings.

A Communications lead will also be appointed from one of the three statutory partner organisations. Where required, the LCRG can seek legal advice from the Local Authority Legal Team.

Methodology:

The LCRG will agree with the reviewers the method by which the review will be conducted, considering the principles of the systems methodology. The methodology should provide a way of looking at and analysing frontline practice as well as organisational structures and learning. The methodology should be able to reach recommendations that will improve outcomes for children.

The LCRG Chair will establish an agreed timetable for the review meetings in accordance with the required timescales of the review and set specific parameters, including timescales for completion of case information, practitioner, and family involvement.

The LCRG Chair will maintain contact with the Business Manager to ensure a co-ordinated response across all parallel review and investigative processes are effective. Regular updates will be sought and obtained from all organisations involved in the review.

Where there is an on-going criminal investigation, the LCRG Chair will ensure that early and regular contact is made with the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to ensure appropriate processes are followed. This relates particularly to any proposed contact with family members, practitioners and managers or any other individuals who may be a potential witness or could be involved in the investigative process.

For an LCSPR to be effective, and in line with the above guidance the review will be conducted in such a way that:

- Recognises the complex circumstances in which professionals work together to safeguard children.
- Seeks to understand precisely who did what and the underlying reasons that led individuals and organisations to act as they did.
- Seeks to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals and organisations involved at the time rather than using hindsight.
- Is transparent about the way data is collected and analysed.
- Makes use of relevant research and case evidence to inform the findings.

Working Together 2023

Involvement of Children and Families, Friends, and Other Support Networks:

It is important that any review should reflect both the child's perspective and the family context.

Children and families can offer a unique perspective into how the delivery of services, support and involvement of organisations were viewed and responded to. It is essential that the review group can listen to family experiences and perspectives and their contribution is considered and used to shape future practice.

Family members could include:

- The Child or Young Person
- Siblings
- Carers
- Grandparents
- Other significant family members and/or friends identified from the Family Association Network/Genogram

As a minimum, the LCRG should consider the following action:

- Appointment of a lead organisation/manager who will act as the family link to the review.

- Notification of the rapid and case review process, what that means for them and how they can access support, including any impact of media coverage.
- Support measures that can be put in place to ensure that they are supported throughout the review process.
- Agree with those to be involved, their views and wishes in relation to what is the most appropriate way for their involvement (for example meeting with the reviewer, in writing, through a known and trusted practitioner, sharing views through a third party or other means identified with the review panel)
- Involvement in feedback in relation to the learning identified during the review.
- Share the report content and findings (not retention of copies at this stage) for comment prior to publication, and, where possible any relevant comments should be considered and incorporated in the final version. Where this is not possible discussions should take place to explain why.
- Ensure they are informed and prepared for any publication of the report.

Final Report:

The LCRG will moderate the work of an LCSPR as the review progresses. The LCRG will work with the author to develop an action plan which considers the wider learning improvement framework. It is the responsibility of the LCRG to identify and agree how practice challenges or recommendations from the LCSPR will be responded to and what action is needed by individual agencies or from a multi-agency perspective.

The final report brings together the learning and themes identified from the review and will analyse and comment on the effectiveness of practice and the systems used to promote the welfare of the child.

The final report should include:

- a summary of any recommended improvements to be made by individuals or organisations in the area to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- an analysis of any systemic or underlying reasons actions were taken or not taken in respect of matters covered by the report.

Any recommendations should make clear what is required of relevant agencies and others both collectively and individually, and by when, and focused on improving outcomes for children.

Working Together 2023

Action Plans:

A draft action plan should be included as part of the final report and should include:

- Timeline for publication of the report and where possible a date identified.
- Action taken to share findings of the report with family members.
- Action taken to brief practitioners who contributed to the review and learning event.
- How lessons learnt will be shared, practice impact and outcomes for children and young people and wider partnership organisations

Once agreed the draft final report and action plan will be presented to by the LCSP Chair to the DSP Executive Group.

The findings from any LCSPR and action plan should be reported in the partnership annual report and what action has been taken or intended to be taken in relation to those findings. Where there is a decision to not implement an action then the reason for this should be stated.

Media/Communication and Publication:

Working Together 2023 identifies the need to promote and share information about improvements, both within the area and beyond.

The LCRG will consider the appropriateness of publication, in line with Working Together guidance and make recommendations to the DSP Executive Group. The impact and views of publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case will be considered in the decision making together with ensuring that reports.

In some cases, the DSP Executive Group may determine it is not appropriate to publish the full LCSPR report (for example in cases that may have unique features that by publishing would identify individuals involved in the case). In such cases a full review will take place to identify the extent of any information that can be published. Where the decision is made not to publish the report or information relating to improvements, the Business Manager will submit DSP rationale to the Panel and Secretary of State. Due regard will be given to any comments shared by the Panel or Secretary of State in respect of publication.

The Business Manager will submit a full copy of an LCSPR to the National Panel and Secretary of State no later than seven working days before any date of publication. Where a decision is made to publish only improvements to be made, following the review, the Business Manager will submit the information to the National Panel and Secretary of State within the same timescale. The Business Manager will also ensure a copy of such will also be provided to Ofsted.

In most cases the final report should be completed within six months from the date of the decision to initiate a review. However, this will depend on the nature and complexity of the case, and, whether there are ongoing criminal and/or coronial investigations. The Business Manager will keep the Panel and Secretary of State updated with any delays.

All media and communication issues will be co-ordinated by the named communication lead for the LCSPR.

Other Learning Activity by the CRG:

The LCRG consider cases referred for notification to the Panel, co-ordinate and undertake Rapid Reviews, decide on any next steps which include whether to undertake an LCSPR and whether the review may have national importance.

The LCRG will also consider cases referred by partner agencies and make recommendations on whether those cases meet the criteria for a multi-agency review, single agency review other learning activity, or, whether no review is required.

The JCRG are responsible for ensuring that reports highlighting the learning from other national, regional, and local safeguarding reviews are considered, learning produced and disseminated across the partnership. There are several types of case review and investigation that involve or can involve children and young people, and these include:

- Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR)
- Domestic Homicide Review (DHR)
- Mental Health Homicide Review (MHHR)
- Youth Justice Board (YJS) Serious Incident Notification and Review
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) Serious Further Offence Review
- Safeguarding and Serious Incident Investigations
- Judicial Reviews
- Criminal Investigation and Justice Processes
- Coroner Inquests
- Section 47 Child Protection Investigations
- Organisation Complaints

It is important to identify any other processes that are running in parallel or being considered. Important principles include insuring adherence to any separate statutory requirements, ensuring appropriate expertise and knowledge, reduction of duplication, maximising effectiveness and learning and minimising the impact on those affected by the case. It is the responsibility of the LCRG Chair to ensure contact is made with Chairs of any parallel process.

The JCRG will regularly audit progress on the implementation of recommended improvements through regular monitoring and follow up actions so that the reviews make a real impact on improving outcomes for children.

The JCRG will provide quarterly reports of discussions and outcomes to the DSP Executive Group and ensure that the DSPs are appraised of progress and outcomes of all relevant learning.

The JCRG and LCRG TOR can be accessed [here](#):

National Reviews:

The national panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its opinion, raise issues that are complex or of national importance.

The criteria the panel must take into account include 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:

- Circumstances where significant harm or death to a child educated otherwise than at school.
- Circumstances 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.
- Circumstances where the case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings.
- Cases which involve a range of types of abuse

The panel can also consider a range of other evidence including inspection, other reports, and research. They may also consider whether a case identifies issues that are complex or of national importance.

Working Together 2023 offers greater flexibility to safeguarding partners to consider how learning is best generated within the safeguarding arrangement. External scrutiny is offered by the National Panel through the submission of Rapid Review reports.