



What we have to do when a child dies



The death of a child is tragic: we don't expect children to die before their parents. Talking and thinking about a child's death is a sensitive and painful subject, particularly for parents, families and carers.

The following information helps explain what has to happen following the death of a child or young person under 18 years.

What is a review and why is it needed?

Government legislation now requires every council to review the death of each child or young person (under 18 years) who lived in their area. This is because in doing so we may find ways of doing things differently that help other children and families in the future.

How does a review happen?

Information about each child and how they died is collected together and summarised into a short report. The information comes from records held by hospitals, local health services (GPs and health visitors), schools, police, children's services or other agencies whose staff knew the child. The report also includes something about the family circumstances so that the Panel can understand the death in its context.

A Child Death Overview Panel that includes doctors, other health specialists, children's services staff and the police meets regularly to look at the reports. They want to be clear what caused the child's death so they can decide whether to recommend changes or improvements to services for children that might prevent similar deaths in the future. Any recommendations are passed on to the people who are responsible for planning and managing services for children locally. They might go as well to specialist agencies such as the fire service or traffic authorities, where appropriate.

The Panel also looks at what support and treatment was offered to the child and their family up to the time of the death; and also what support was offered to the family after the death. The Panel can recommend changes to these arrangements where need be.



What does this mean for you?

As part of this process, our Panel has been informed of your child's death. We'll be looking at a report about what happened and some information about your home circumstances. It may take several months before we have finished our work, as we have to wait until the other enquiries about the death are completed, such as the work of the pathologist and coroner, or any legal processes.

In the meantime, we'll be checking that you and your family are receiving the support that you need.

Can you contribute?

You can write to us to give us your views, share any information that you may have or ask any questions. We'll try to deal with your questions but we are not involved in deciding how your child died or if anyone is to

blame. If you prefer it, you can ask whoever is supporting you currently to pass on your views to us.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for parents or family representatives to attend the Panel meetings.

All the information we gather will be treated with the greatest respect and in strictest confidence. We promise that none of our findings, recommendations or reports will name or identify your child or family. We cannot give you individual feedback about your child's death but you are welcome to read our annual report that is available on each council's website or in hard copy from Endeavour House (see overleaf).



The Councils, Hospitals and Primary Care Trusts in Bolton, Salford and Wigan have agreed to have a joint Child Death Overview Panel.

You can contact the Panel at Endeavour House,
Watersmeeting Road, Bolton BL1 8SW.

Further information about the role of Child Death Overview Panels can be found on Bolton, Salford and Wigan's websites and from the Government Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children from Harm 2006.

www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk

www.salford.gov.uk

www.wigan.gov.uk

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether

Useful resources - October 2008

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

www.uk-sands.org - tel 0800282986

Coping with loss for parents (how to help your child)

Pat Elliot

Sad isn't Bad: a good grief guidebook for kids dealing with loss

Michaelane Mundy

Losing a Child

Linda Hurcombe

Water Bugs and Dragonflies: explaining death to young children

Doris Stickney

Large print, interpretations, text only and audio formats of this publication can be produced on request. Please call **01204 337459** or email

boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk