

**BOLTON  
SAFEGUARDING  
CHILDREN  
PARTNERSHIP**

**PRACTICE  
REVIEW  
GUIDANCE**



## **1. PURPOSE**

The guidance seeks to ensure that there are robust and transparent arrangements in place to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which are likely to raise issues of importance for multi-agency practice to safeguard children. The guide also set out the local arrangements to review and identify learning from child safeguarding cases.

Conducting a multi-agency review supports local partners to understand not only what happened but also why things happened as they did. Reflecting and analysing the impact of different organisations interventions with a child, and their family is essential to improve our collective knowledge and help to improve future responses. Reviews also provide opportunities to consider whether or not different approaches or actions are likely to have resulted in a different outcome.

It is important to note that reviews are not conducted to hold individuals, organisations or agencies to account, but rather to identify what needs to change to further strengthen our local safeguarding children arrangements.

The guidance complies with statutory guidance set out in Chapter 4, [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) July 2018 and with the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: practice guidance](#) April 2019.

In September 2022, the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published 'Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel guidance for safeguarding partners'. This shares with local areas what the panel constitutes as good practice based on over 1,500 reviews of serious incidents since the Panel's inception. In response, this local guidance has been updated and further developed in response to this publication.

## **2. PRACTICE PRINCIPLES**

Bolton's safeguarding children arrangements set out a commitment to create a culture of continuous development, improvement and learning. In carrying out any type of review, we will:

- Ensure that practice reviews focus on the lived experiences of children
- Work collaboratively with front-line practitioners, children and their families to identify learning and develop effective responses
- Recognise the impact and challenges for those involved in a review and be sensitive in our approach
- Be open and transparent during the review
- Encourage active feedback throughout the review from all those involved
- Seek to use learning to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents, as well as promoting and embedding consistent good practice

## **3. REVIEW DEFINITIONS AND THRESHOLDS**

The table below defines the reviews that will be facilitated and threshold indicators: -

<b>Review</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Threshold</b>
Rapid Review	A statutory review completed within 15 working days to establish the relevant facts, identify any immediate action needed to safeguard children, consider potential improvement to local arrangements and decide whether a local CSPR is required	This is a serious child safeguarding case. A child has suffered a serious injury or death as a result of child abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect.
Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR)	A statutory review completed within six months. The review will work with practitioners, leaders and families to analyse in more depth the key factors relating to the serious injury or death. The review should produce learning that supports local safeguarding arrangements to be strengthened.	This is a serious child safeguarding case. A child has suffered a serious injury or death as a result of child abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect <b>and</b> it is an agreed outcome from the Rapid Review
Learn from Success Review	This is a non-statutory review and is completed within three months. It will work with practitioners and families to identify what worked well and the factors that contributed to better outcomes.	Consistently good multi-agency practice that has led to improved outcomes for a child
Local Learning Review	This is a non-statutory and is completed within three months. The review will work with practitioners and leaders to better understand the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.	A child has suffered injury or death and there are factors in local safeguarding practice that could be strengthened
Local Thematic Review	A series of child injuries or deaths that highlight a commonly recurring issue for safeguarding children practice	Three or more child injuries or deaths and would benefit local learning by further investigation and analysis of safeguarding practice

#### **4. REVIEW PROCESSES**

This section provides further detail on the arrangements for identifying and reviewing children's experiences, including those that may indicate a serious child safeguarding case: -

**The Criteria for Serious Child Safeguarding Case may have been met: -**

##### **Stage 1 – Notification and Decision Making**

###### **Notification by the Local Authority**

- Any practitioner within the Local Authority can make a notification to the statutory partners where they believe the threshold for a serious child safeguarding case may have been met
- Prior to making a notification, the practitioner should refer to their internal guidance; as a minimum the statutory partners would expect a discussion takes place with a line manager, designated or named professional or equivalent to explore the appropriateness of the notification. This discussion should reflect the child's lived

experience and the domains in the notification form, paying attention to the rationale as to why this is a serious safeguarding case

- Where the Local Authority confirms that a child ordinarily resident in the area has been abused or neglected and the child has died or is seriously harmed a notification should be made to Ofsted/National Panel via the online notification portal by the named user (Head of Service, Conferencing, Reviewing and Partnerships or Partnership Business Manager)
- The Local Authority should make the notification within five working days of becoming aware of the event. The Local Authority should simultaneously report the event to the safeguarding partners using the agreed notification form.
- On receipt of the Local Authority notification a Rapid Review will be initiated by the safeguarding partners as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

### **Notification by Organisations**

- Any organisation or practitioner in Bolton can make a notification to the statutory partners where they believe the threshold for a serious child safeguarding case may have been met
- Prior to making a notification, each organisation should refer to their relevant internal guidance; as a minimum the statutory partners would expect a discussion takes place with a line manager, designated or named professional or equivalent to explore the appropriateness of the notification. This discussion should reflect the child's lived experience and the domains in the notification form, paying attention to the rationale as to why this is a serious safeguarding case
- The notification form should be fully completed using the information known to the notifying practitioner/organisation and sent securely to [boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk); receipt of the notification will be acknowledged within one working day
- Advice and further information about making a notification is available on 01204 337964 or email [boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk)

### **Notification of a Concern from Parents/Community Members**

- Parents and members of the community can make notifications to the statutory partners if they are concerned about how services worked together to ensure a child's welfare and/or safety
- Parents/community members should be supported by those practitioners working with them to contact the Partnership Business Manager, who will support them to complete the notification form and ensure there is sufficient information for the statutory partners to make an informed decision

### **Statutory Partner Decision Making**

- Within one working day of receiving the notification from an organisation, parent or community member, a copy of the notification form will be sent by the Business Manager to the statutory partners via secure email
- A meeting will be convened bringing the three delegated statutory partners together (Director of Childrens Services, GM ICB Locality Safeguarding Lead and GMP Divisional Superintendent<sup>1</sup>) to decide whether the threshold for a serious child

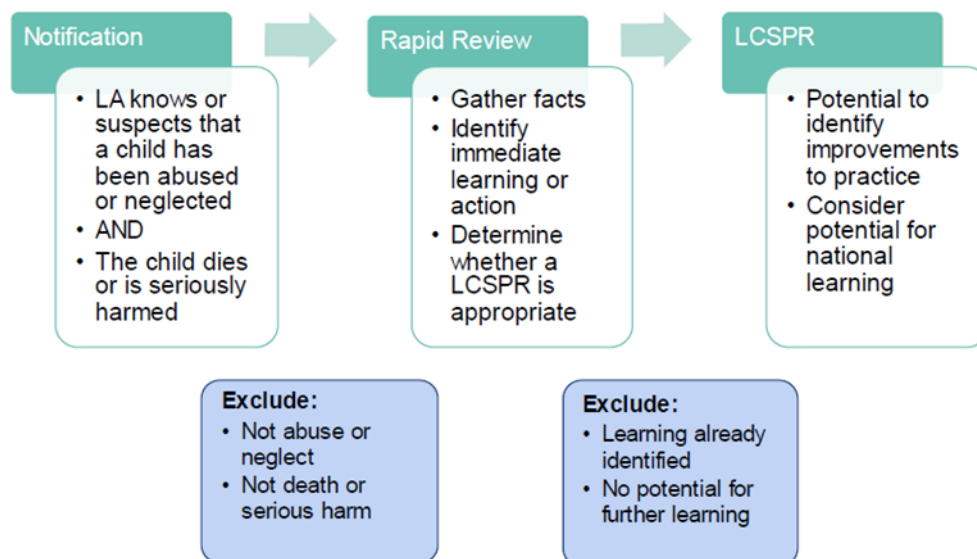
---

<sup>1</sup> NB – A representative from the GMP Investigation and Safeguarding Review Team will also be invited but it is local policy for the divisional GMP to be the decision maker

safeguarding case has been met; if it is not met consideration will always be given as to any potential learning and the appropriate approach to identify this. A set of questions have been developed from the supplementary national guidance and these are included in Section 8 of this guidance

- Where the decision is that a Rapid Review will be completed, the Local Authority will ensure a notification is made to Ofsted/National Panel via the online notification portal
- While the responsibility for notification rests with the local authority, once a case has been notified, responsibility for the rapid review rests with the three safeguarding partners. Good practice we have seen suggests that the local authority should wherever possible consult with other safeguarding partners when deciding whether to notify.
- The diagram<sup>2</sup> below outlines the three key stages in the process of learning from serious cases and the conditions for progressing to a review: -

**Figure 1: Decision making around reviews**



### Outcome

- The decision and rationale from the three partners will be fed back to the referrer within two working days
- If an organisation wishes to challenge the decision of the three statutory partners, they should follow the established escalation process
- A notification will be made via the National Panel online portal<sup>3</sup>; this will be completed either by the BSCP Business Manager or Head of Service for Conference, Reviews and Partnership as agreed by the Local Authority
- Copies of the national notification will be stored securely within the Local Authority's systems. The BSCP Business Manager and administrators will be able to access and retrieve where required for a legitimate purpose

<sup>2</sup> This diagram is taken from P7 Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel guidance for safeguarding partners'

<sup>3</sup> <https://childsafeguarding.education.gov.uk/>

## Stage 2 – Rapid Review

All Rapid Reviews must be completed within fifteen working days.

- Organisations will be notified of the Rapid Review by the Business Manager. Where an organisation has supported a child or their family in the time period, they should complete the Rapid Review single agency report and chronology and return it securely to [boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk) by the stipulated date
- A multi-agency chronology will be collated and sent, along with the single agency reports, to members of the Rapid Review Group; the Rapid Review meeting will be held within eleven working days of the decision to complete a Rapid Review
- The Rapid Review Meeting will: -
  - Gather the facts about the child, their family and multi-agency safeguarding practice, as far as they can be readily established at the time
  - Discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately, this includes the safety of children associated with the event as well the wider child population
  - Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
  - Decide what steps they should take next, including whether to undertake a Child Safeguarding Practice Review
- The Rapid Review must meet the standard required by Working Together guidance and the supplementary guidance provided by the National Panel. The report should be proportionate to the complexity and seriousness of the issues raised by the case. For example, if a case clearly meets the criteria, the focus of the rapid review will be on the potential learning from the case and consider any immediate steps which need to be taken in relation to systemic or practice issues
- The Rapid Review will be facilitated by the Business Manager, unless there is a conflict of interest in which case a Designated Health Practitioner will fulfil this role
- A Rapid Review report will be completed and a copy sent to each of the partners for quality assurance and endorsement purposes; once agreed it will be sent by the Business Manager to the [National Panel](#) within the required timescales

### Outcome

- For safeguarding partners, the rapid review should conclude with a decision about whether or not an LCSPR should be commissioned using the criteria set out in Working Together 2018. Good practice is where partnerships identify what has been learnt and how this learning will be disseminated and acted on across the local partnership
- If the decision is to commission an LCSPR, the key lines of enquiry and the questions that are to be answered by the review process should be set out in the conclusion to the rapid review this will be progressed as outlined in Stage 3
- Where a Rapid Review recommends no further action, the learning from the review will be summarised and published as a learning brief and action plans developed where needed by the individual agencies and on behalf of the statutory partners

- Decisions and recommendations made during the Rapid Review stage can be reviewed as necessary should any new and/or concerning information emerge or following feedback from the National Panel
- A tracker will be maintained by the statutory partners to ensure any recurring themes are quickly identified and responded to

### **Stage 3 – Commission and Completion of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review**

The safeguarding partners are responsible for commissioning and supervising reviewers for local reviews. In all instances they should consider whether the reviewer has the following: -

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

Dependent on the complexity of the review, statutory partners may agree to commission a reviewer from one of the statutory partners or relevant agencies within Bolton or a neighbouring area, as long as they meet the above criteria and any additional person specifications set by the statutory partners. The reviewer will be commissioned via an ‘expressions of interest’ process and panel interview.

Where a review may be complex in nature or require sector specific expertise, the statutory partners will seek to appoint an individual from the Greater Manchester Reviewer Pool or National Panel Review Pool. However, if it is considered there to be no reviewers with availability or suitable experience for a particular review, the partners may also decide to select a person from outside the pool to undertake or support that review.

The scope, aims, and terms of reference of the LCSPR should be determined at the start and should be specified clearly in the final report. They should stem from the learning identified in the rapid review. While undertaking an LCSPR, alternative lines of enquiry or methods might be required and any amendments should be reflected in the final report.



## **The Criteria for Learn from Success Review, Local Learning Review or Thematic Review may have been met: -**

### **Stage 1 - Notification and Decision Making**

#### **Notification by Organisations**

- Any organisation or practitioner in Bolton can make a notification to the statutory partners where they believe the threshold for Learn From Success Review or Local Learning Review are met
- Prior to making a notification, each organisation should refer to their relevant internal guidance; as a minimum the statutory partners would expect a discussion takes place with a line manager, designated or named professional or equivalent to explore the appropriateness of the notification. This discussion should reflect the child's lived experience and the domains in the notification form, paying attention to the rationale as to why this child's experience can support learning across the system
- Where an organisation decides that a notification should be made, they should discuss and seek consent from relevant family members and the child where age appropriate
- The notification form should be fully completed using the information known to the notifying practitioner/organisation and sent securely to [boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk); receipt of the notification will be acknowledged within one working day
- Advice and further information about making a notification is available on 01204 337964 or email [boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk](mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk)

**NB – Thematic Reviews can also be identified directly by the statutory partners based on evidence gathered from notifications**

#### **Notification from Parents/Community Members**

- Parents and members of the community can also make notifications to the statutory partners where they believe the threshold for Learn From Success Review or Local Learning Review are met
- Parents/community members should be supported by those practitioners working with them to contact the Business Manager, who will then support them to complete the notification form and ensure there is sufficient information for the statutory partners to make an informed decision

#### **Statutory Partner Decision Making**

- Within one working day of receiving the notification from an organisation, parent or community member, a copy of the notification form will be sent by the Business Manager to the statutory partners via secure email
- A meeting will be convened bringing the three delegated statutory partners together (Director of Childrens Services, CCG Safeguarding Lead and GMP Divisional Superintendent) to decide whether the threshold Learn From Success Review or Local Learning Review are met

#### **Outcome**

- The decision and rationale from the three partners will be fed back to the referrer within two working days
- If an organisation wishes to challenge the decision of the three statutory partners, they should follow the established escalation process



## **Stage 2 – Commission and Completion of a Learn from Success Review, Local Learning Review or Thematic Review**

The Implementation Group Chair and Business Manager are responsible for commissioning and supervising reviewers for such reviews. In all instances they should consider whether the reviewer has the following: -

- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to the themes identified and the learning model being applied
- Skilled in engaging practitioners, children and families
- Knowledge and understanding of research relevant to the themes and focus of the review
- Ability to recognise the complex circumstances in which practitioners work together and the factors that may inhibit or promote effective safeguarding arrangements
- Ability to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals, organisations or agencies involved at the time rather than using hindsight
- Ability to offer challenge to organisations and individuals as needed
- Communicate findings effectively
- Whether the reviewer has any real or perceived conflict of interest

The priority will be to seek an independent reviewer from one of the statutory partners or relevant agencies. They will be expected to meet the above criteria and any additional person specifications set by the statutory partners. The reviewer will be commissioned via an 'expressions of interest' process and panel interview. However, if it is considered there to be no reviewers with availability or suitable experience for a particular review, it may be decided to select an external person to undertake or support that review.

### **5. INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS**

An essential and integral part of any review undertaken is seeking the experiences of all those directly involved. The statutory partners in Bolton recognise the importance of including front-line practitioners, their managers, service leads, children and their families throughout any review. The partners are committed to making this happen and will ensure that any review is designed to be as inclusive as possible. It is only by understanding 'how things seemed to those directly involved' that we can gain insight in how decisions are made, what parts of the system inform and support decision-making and intervention (or don't), what works well and where improvement is needed.

In undertaking reviews, the following will be applied to ensure the effective engagement of all: -

- **Participation** - it is entirely appropriate for practitioners, children and family members to decide not to take part in a review and as statutory partners this will be respected. To support practitioners, children and families to make informed decisions about whether or not to participate in a review a range of information will be provided about the process and there will be opportunities for those involved to talk directly to the reviewer or business manager
- **Communication** – written information about the review and the approach being used will be made available to all participants. It will also clearly set out what can be expected of the review process/reviewer as well as detailing what is expected from

participants. The reviewer and partnership business manager will also be available for any participant to contact should they have any worries or need clarification

- **Open, Honest and Transparent** – at every stage of the review process consideration will be given as to the involvement and engagement of practitioners, children and family members. This will include feedback on review progress, views on the emerging findings, identifying practice strengths and deficits, informing and influencing review recommendations
- **Confidentiality** - not all information will be appropriate to share within the full review, such information might include personal information or information which, if disclosed, could compromise criminal investigations or proceedings. If the police are likely to question someone, care will need to be taken not to pre-empt their interview or cause a situation where an individual is compromised
- **Inclusivity** – review approaches will ensure that practitioners, children and family members with diverse backgrounds and characteristics will be able to participate. This will include, but not limited to: -
  - Choosing venues that are accessible and have suitable adaptations as required
  - Being flexible on the timing participation, for example organising meetings during evenings or weekends
  - Arranging support where spoken English is not the primary means of communication
  - Offering different methods to communicate with the review, for example email, on-line meetings, letters etc.
- **Care and support** – being involved in a review can be difficult time for those involved. The statutory partners offer direct access to free counselling support to anyone involved in the review, this can be discussed and accessed by contacting the partnership business manager

## 6. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SCRUTINY OF REVIEW PROCESSES

### Single Agency Reports

It is the responsibility of each agency contributing to the review at any stage to ensure that their written submissions are of good quality and offer rigorous analysis of practice. Good practice in writing a report is suggested below: -

- Written in plain English, avoiding the use of jargon; where the use of specialist/service specific terms or abbreviations cannot be avoided these should be fully explained
- Information is presented in a structured, concise way and there is a balance between descriptive content and critical/diagnostic analysis of practice
- Allocate time to gather and read your source information; this will help to identify the pertinent facts and key points in the child's journey; dedicated time should be allocated to write the report and once written, leave a period of time before you proofread and reflect
- Make clear, concise and evidence-based judgements about single agency practice and the action needed to promote good practice or to implement improvements
- Have your report quality assured/proofed by a line manager or nominated lead; fresh eyes may identify any errors, omissions or additional learning

- An improvement/action plan is developed to ensure learning impacts on practice and its progress is tracked by the individual organisation. Progress against action and the impact learning has had on organisational practice should be reported to the safeguarding partners as requested

### **Multi-agency Review Reports**

The final report should include the following as a minimum: -

- A concise summary of the events that led to the review; this should strike a balance between giving sufficient facts to put learning into context while at the same time limiting any adverse impact or harm to those involved
- An analysis of the underlying factors or systemic issues that influenced practice; this should identify the reasons why events occurred as they did
- Recommended improvements for statutory and relevant agencies; all recommendations should be clear on what is required of relevant agencies and others collectively and individually, by when, and focussed on improving outcomes for children
- An improvement/action plan is developed to ensure learning impacts on practice and progress is tracked by the CSPR group on behalf of the safeguarding partners

Throughout the process, regular reviews will be held to track the progress of the report and to sense check emerging themes and findings. The final draft report will be quality assured by the review group overseeing the report. Once agreed the final report will be presented to members of Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership for their endorsement. Should any of the statutory partners, or relevant agencies have concerns about the accuracy or the quality of the report these should be addressed during the progress reviews. If unresolved these will be escalated through the partnership.

The safeguarding partners will take account of the findings from their own local reviews and from all national reviews, with a view to considering how identified improvements should be implemented locally, including the way in which organisations and agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **Quality of the Reviewer/Approach**

Everyone who contributes to a review will be invited to share their views on the quality of the review and approach adopted. This feedback will enable the partners to learn about how these arrangements can be further developed and strengthened as necessary.










## **7. LEARNING INTO PRACTICE**

The principal purpose of any review is to identify what can be learned to further strengthen and improve local safeguarding arrangements, while reducing the likelihood of similar events happening again. Making change happen can be a challenge. In order to ensure that learning is shared across the system and that it has a positive impact on practice, the statutory partners will undertake all or some of the elements below. The approaches agreed will be dependent on the nature of the review: -

- Publish a learning brief from each completed review; it is expected that statutory partners and relevant agencies actively promote and reflect on the learning for their organisation
- Use a 'Learning Model' approach to address stubborn challenges in the system or recurring themes

- Publish an annual summary of learning from reviews, responses and impacts within the statutory partners annual report
- Use the partnership Performance and Quality Framework as a means to test whether learning is embedded and the extent to which it is making a positive impact on improving outcomes for children
- Hold statutory and relevant agencies to account by challenging them to provide evidence and assurance as to how they have implemented learning within their system and the difference this has made (including where challenges or difficulties may remain)

## 8. Local Resources

<p><b>Review Decision Making Process and Screening Questions</b></p>  RR Flowchart May 2022.pdf  RR Screening Questions Oct 2022.d	<p><b>Practice Review Notification Template</b></p>  GM Final SCSC Notification Form July
<p><b>Agency Rapid Review Report</b></p>  Rapid Review Agency Report.docx	<p><b>Rapid Review Template</b></p>  Rapid Review Report.doc
<p><b>Review Methodologies</b></p>  Review Methodology Options.pdf	<p><b>Report Quality Markers</b></p>  BSCP Report Quality Markers.pdf
<p><b>Learning Brief Template</b></p>  Learning Brief Template for reviews	<p><b>Review Feedback</b></p>  Evaluation Review.doc

### Document Control

Version 2.1  
 Agreed January 2023  
 Update GM Notification Template Embedded July 2023  
 Review April 2024