

Serious Incident Notifications and Rapid Reviews Briefing

The local authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (National Panel) if it's known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected and:

- child dies or is seriously harmed in your area
- child dies or is seriously harmed outside England, who is normally resident in your area.

For looked-after children, the local authority must notify the National Panel of their death whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The local authority must notify the National Panel within 5 working days of becoming aware of the incident. The National Panel will share all notifications with:

- the Department for Education
- Ofsted



Is it serious?

The first consideration in deciding whether to make a notification is whether or not the incident is serious, using the definition set out in *Working Together (2018)*. Notifications must always be made if abuse or neglect is a cause of, or a contributory factor to, the serious incident, or where it is suspected. The exception to this is the local authority must notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected. When deciding whether the level of harm to a child is serious, may sometimes be straight forward, for example, because the child has a life-changing and long term injury or an injury that is clearly life-threatening, such as requiring resuscitation or intensive care treatment. However, some incidents are not so straight forward and, in these circumstances, a judgement about seriousness is likely to be made. The National Panel has noted, how few notifications are received about severe neglect and, for those that are received, how the level of seriousness differs significantly.

In Darlington, whilst it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to notify, the Statutory Safeguarding Partners will determine whether the event reaches the criteria for a notification.

Submitting a notification

If an organisation determines the criteria for serious incident notification is met, the notifiable incident [referral form](#) must be submitted to Darlington Safeguarding Partnership, via the Business Unit within one working day of becoming aware of the incident.

The business unit will record the submission and inform the Statutory Safeguarding Partners within one working day. The Statutory Partners must consider the referral within five working days and determine if criteria for notification has been met.

Using the child safeguarding incident notification system

The local authority must notify the National Panel using the child [safeguarding incident notification system](#). The local authority must raise only 1 notification per incident, even if more than 1 child is affected. The notification can include:

- details of up to 4 children per incident
- further information, including details of other children involved

Rapid Review

Once a serious incident notification has been made, the National Panel will request that the Local Safeguarding Partnership should conduct a Rapid Review of the case within 15 working days of the incident. The DSP business team will liaise with relevant partners and request information and a brief appraisal of practice. The DSP will then convene a Rapid Review Meeting to gather the facts about the case, as far as can be readily established, discuss whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately, consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and decide what steps to take next, including whether or not to undertake a national Child Safeguarding Practice Review (using Working Together 2018 criteria). The LSCP will send the completed Rapid Review to the National Panel for their consideration. NB: If a child dies, the child death overview panel (CDOP) procedures will run parallel to any serious incident notification / rapid review.

References:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) – page 83

[Child safeguarding practice review panel: practice guidance 2019](#)

