

TSCP Procedural Guidance for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR)

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Serious child safeguarding cases.....	4
- Notification of Serious Safeguarding Incident.....	4
Serious incident notification and screening.....	4
- Screening Panel.....	4
Case Review.....	5
Rapid Review.....	5
- Rapid Review Report.....	6
Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).....	6
- Independent Reviewer.....	7
- Involvement of children and families.....	8
- CSPR report.....	8
- Learning from CSPR.....	9
Scrutiny and challenge.....	10
Professional differences and escalation.....	10

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the arrangements by which Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) will respond to the notification of a serious safeguarding incident, as set by statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023), and the initiation of case review procedures and timescales. Reference is made to statutory responsibilities for the undertaking of Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR), and how the Partnership will commission such work.

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at a local level with the safeguarding partners. Safeguarding partners must:

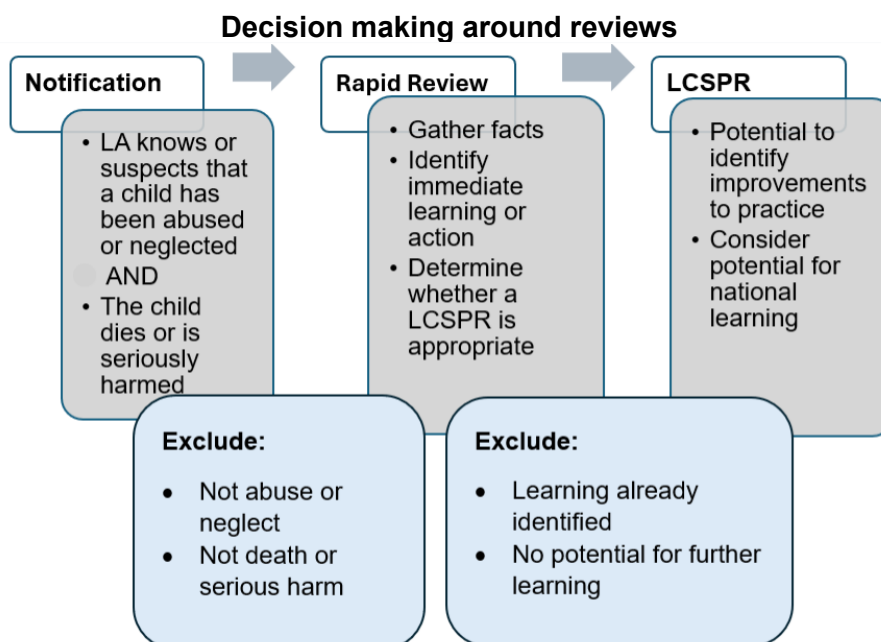
- Identify and review serious child safeguarding cases which, in their opinion, raise issues of importance in relation to their area.
- Commission and oversee the review of those cases if they consider it appropriate.

CSPR procedural guidance outlines the processes for identifying serious child safeguarding cases, making notifications to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, conducting Rapid Reviews, and the commissioning, governance and publication of local CSPRs, where required.

Working Together 2023 sets out the role of safeguarding partners to establish this multi-agency system of learning and reflection locally. Reviews are designed to prevent or reduce the risk of recurrence of similar incidents. Safeguarding partners have a shared responsibility for ensuring that Rapid reviews and CSPRs lead to effective learning which drives practice change.

There are three key stages in the process of learning from serious incidents:

- Serious incident notification to Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel shared with Ofsted and the DfE.
- Rapid Review which should be completed within 15 working days of notification.
- Consideration of a local CSPR or national review.



The CSPR process may need to be flexible and responsive to a range of presenting factors, dependent on the nature and complexity of each case. Where learning is identified but the case does not meet the criteria for serious harm / Rapid Review, a local learning review and/or audit and assurance activity can be considered by the Partnership.

In addition to Working Together 2023, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published the following guidance in June 2025 - [Guidance for Safeguarding Partners](#).

SERIOUS CHILD SAFEGUARDING CASES

Serious child safeguarding cases are those in which:

- Abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected
- The child has died or been seriously harmed

Serious harm 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. 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.

Notifications of serious child safeguarding cases must always be made if abuse or neglect is a cause of, or a contributory factor to, the serious incident or harm, or where it is suspected. However, where the family is known to Children's Social Care because of a recent incident or current concern about abuse or neglect and where there has been for example a suicide or unexplained death, professionals should also consider the incident as serious.

Notification of Serious Safeguarding Incident

The local authority, on behalf of the safeguarding partners, has a duty to notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel about all serious incidents that meet the criteria via the Child Safeguarding Online Notification System. It should do so within **5 working days** of becoming aware it has occurred.

Although the responsibility to notify rests with the local authority, all three Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSP) should agree which incidents should be notified in their local area. Notification is to be made to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if:

- (a) The child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area.
- (b) While normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.
- (c) Whenever abuse or neglect is identified, or suspected, as a cause or contributing factor in a serious incident, a notification must be made. While the legal responsibility to report such incidents lies with the Local Authority, all partner organisations have a duty to inform the safeguarding partners if they believe an incident may meet the criteria for notification.

SERIOUS INCIDENT NOTIFICATION AND SCREENING

To support partners and professionals to recognise and refer appropriate cases, TSCP uses the Greater Manchester Serious Child Safeguarding Case Notification Form (SIN), see **Appendix A**. The form allows agencies to outline the nature of the incident (injury/harm) and case factors known at the point of referral.

All agencies should have access to the SIN referral form, and this can also be found on the TSCP website, [Home - Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership](#). Referrals should be emailed to the TSCP, TSCP@tameside.gov.uk.

Upon receipt, the SIN form will be reviewed and considered by the TSCP Business Manager. There is a requirement and expectation that individual agencies have overseen and reviewed the completion of the SIN form prior to submission.

Screening Panel

The first step is for TSCP to instruct a Screening Panel made up of DSP representatives from the three statutory safeguarding agencies (Local Authority / Police / Health). The screening process will be initiated and Chaired by the TSCP Business Manager. The Business Manager is responsible for ensuring communication and information sharing is timely and focused.

The Screening Panel will meet no later than **2 working days** from the Serious Child Notification form being received. Information detailed within the Serious Child Notification form will be reviewed and fully considered to determine whether criteria for a Rapid Review is met.

A decision outcome will be reached by method of a majority vote of the statutory partners. During this process, consideration is also made as to whether the incident is notifiable and if steps have been, or need to be taken as part of the reporting pathway to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. Guidance set within Working Together 2023 states that suitable notification of a serious incident must be made within **5 working days** of the referral being received.

Should Rapid Review criteria be met, the Screening Panel, must give full consideration and determine the appropriate Chair and timeframe for the review. For example, this could be from the date of the incident to the SIN referral, or from a child's date of birth or the date they were first known to services. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

On conclusion of the Screening Panel, outcome decisions will be shared with the Independent Scrutineer. The Scrutineer will offer a view to the DSPs. If the Scrutineer disagrees with the outcome, a meeting will be arranged with the Screening Panel to discuss their rationale.

CASE REVIEW

A serious incident referral to TSCP can instruct a range of responses and case review activity. The Screening Panel will determine the following next steps:

- Meets criteria for Rapid Review.
- Does not meet criteria for Rapid Review but informs a local learning review, audit, learning or assurance activity.
- Does not meet criteria for Rapid Review or audit (no further action).

RAPID REVIEW

When safeguarding partners notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel about a serious incident they must undertake a Rapid Review of the child's experience within **15 working days**, calculated from the date that the notification was sent to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

One of the key purposes of a Rapid Review is to identify if there is any immediate action required to ensure children's safety, therefore the meeting need to be held promptly. Safeguarding partners should also use this process to identify areas for learning and improvement in how agencies are working together, including whether the serious harm or death seen in this incident may be indicative of wider system problems at a local level.

Safeguarding partners should inform the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel if a Rapid Review will be delayed beyond 15 working days from the date of notification, including the reason or the delay and when the report will be submitted to, Mailbox.NationalReviewPanel@education.gov.uk

When a Screening Panel determines that criteria for Rapid Review is met, steps will be taken to ensure that identified safeguarding partners with awareness of the case, child/children and family, are instructed to promptly contribute and undertake the review.

Working Together 2023 states that the safeguarding partners should promptly undertake a Rapid Review of the case. The review enables them to:

- Gather the facts about the case, as far as they can be readily established.
- Discuss whether any immediate action is needed to ensure the child/children's safety and share any learning appropriately.
- Consider the potential for identifying improvements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Consider single agency and multi-agency learning and actions that should be taken, including next steps on whether, or not, to recommend a local CSPA.
- If the recommendation is taken not to proceed with a CSPA, members will provide a summary of why it does not meet the criteria.

A Rapid Review Information Request Form, see **Appendix B**, will be circulated, at the point of instruction, for completion in advance of the Rapid Review meeting. Agencies are expected to collate all relevant information and records relating to the case.

Agencies must return the completed request form to the TSCP Business Manager within identified and agreed timescales. The Business Manager will circulate a collated case summary and chronology document in advance of, and in preparation for the Rapid Review meeting.

Rapid Review Report

TSCP Business Manager will provide direct support to the Rapid Review Chair, to author and finalise the report. On completion, all representatives involved will have the opportunity to agree and or amend the report prior to it being finalised for submission to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. The DSPs and Independent Scrutineer will also be made aware of the review outcome, the decision summary and next steps.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE REVIEW (CSPA)

Guidance and legislation on the approach and undertaking of CSAs is set out in the following documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: Guidance for safeguarding partners 2022

The final CSPA report and learning must be made available no later than **6 months** after the decision to initiate a review. This ensures that learning remains relevant and can be applied to current practice.

It is acknowledged that certain challenges, such as ongoing criminal investigations or coronial processes, may impact on this. In such situations, the partnership will take reasonable steps to continue the review process without compromising these proceedings. Where early learning and actions are identified, steps to implement them promptly, will be taken to avoid any delays in improving service delivery and multi-agency working practices.

For a CSPA to be effective it should be conducted in a way which:

- 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.

Should it be determined that a CSPA is not required, either because the criteria is not met or learning is already embedded, alternative processes may be used.

The criteria, which the local safeguarding partners must consider when deciding whether to initiate a CSPA or an alternative learning process include whether the case:

- Highlights improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified.
- Highlights recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children.
- Highlights two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- Is one which the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel have considered and concluded a local review may be appropriate.

Safeguarding partners should 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 integrated care board 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 automatically require safeguarding partners to undertake a CSPR. If the identified learning is already known and changes in practice are underway, partners may determine that a review is unnecessary. Equally, some cases may not meet the definition of a 'serious child safeguarding case' but still raise important local issues, such as opportunities for learning from good practice. In such instances, safeguarding partners may choose to initiate a review.

The decision to proceed to a CSPR rests with the statutory safeguarding partners. On such occasions a planning meeting will be held, including the TSCP Business Manager, Rapid Review Chair and additional partnership representatives may also be included as necessary. The scope of the review, terms of reference and key lines of enquiry will be drafted for approval of DSPs.

Independent Reviewer

Statutory safeguarding partners have responsibility for the commissioning and supervision of a suitable Independent Reviewer. The Independent Reviewer appointed for a CSPR must be a suitably experienced professional, who is not directly associated with any of the agencies involved in the review. This ensures impartiality and objectivity throughout the process. The reviewer will be responsible for leading and coordinating the local CSPR and the final report.

A thorough appointment process will be undertaken and TSCP Business Manager will seek and collate CVs for any potential reviewers, to be considered reviewed by DSPs and Independent Scrutineer, who will decide on the most suitable and appointable reviewer. This will primarily be based on case factors and experience.

When an Independent Reviewer is appointed, the National Panel, Ofsted and DfE should be informed of the name of the reviewer undertaking the review. The Chair and members of the TSCP Learning & Review Strategic Group will oversee the undertaking of the CSPR and it is important that checkpoints and timescales associated with the review are closely monitored and managed.

Working Together 2023 states that in all cases they should consider whether the reviewer has:

- Professional knowledge, understanding and practice relevant to CSPRs, 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.
- 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 any real or perceived conflict of interest

As part of their duty to ensure the review is of satisfactory quality, the safeguarding partners should ensure that:

- Practitioners are fully involved and invited to contribute their perspectives without fear of being blamed for actions they took in good faith.

- Families, including surviving children (in order that the child is at the centre of the process) are invited to contribute.
- Families understand how they are going to be involved and have their expectations appropriately and sensitively managed.

As part of the final governance and review, TSCP Board members will be asked to consider whether they envisage any issues in publication of the final report. They should consider carefully how best to manage the impact of the publication on children, family members, practitioners and others closely affected by the case and ensure that reports are written in such a way so that what is published avoids harming the welfare of any children or vulnerable adults involved in the case.

Reports should be published **6 months** following the decision to initiate the review and reports or information must be publicly available for at least one year. A copy of the full report is to be shared with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Secretary of State no later than seven working days before the date of publication.

Where it has been decided only to publish information relating to the improvements to be made following the review, a copy of that information will also be shared with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Secretary of State within the same timescale. The report, or information about improvements, is sent to Ofsted within the same timescale. Where other proceedings may have an impact on or delay publication, (for example, an ongoing criminal investigation, inquest or future prosecution), the safeguarding partners should inform the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Secretary of State of the reasons for the delay.

Safeguarding partners should also set out for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and the Secretary of State the justification for any decision not to publish either the full report or information relating to improvements. Safeguarding partners should have regard to any comments that the panel or the Secretary of State may make in respect of publication.

Involvement of children and families

Within the local CSPR process, there is the expectation to give consideration to how families and, where appropriate, children, can be involved in and contribute to the review. This helps provides a valuable opportunity for them to share their views and lived experiences. These insights can highlight how services were perceived and how agencies engaged with the family, offering a perspective that may not have been captured in the professional records.

Key partners will identify the most appropriate person to contact the family and as a minimum, family members should:

- Be informed about the CSPR process and what it involves.
- Agree on the level and frequency of contact to ensure families are kept updated throughout the process.
- Be supported to contribute to the review process – whether in writing, through meetings or via a third party or by suitable means.
- Receive feedback on the learning and outcomes identified.
- Be prepared for the publication of the report in a timely manner, including any anticipated media interest.
- Receive a read-only version of the report before publication, allowing them the opportunity to comment and review. Comments should be considered for inclusion where possible in the final version.

CSPR Report

The CSPR report establishes key findings and themes from the review, evaluating the effectiveness of practice and system in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The Chair of the Learning & Review Strategic Group has responsibility for collating the report which should include the following:

- Summary of Key findings that clearly outline the main outcomes of the review and highlights both effective practice and areas of concern.
- Identification of themes and patterns, drawing out recurring issues or systemic weaknesses as well as noting trends in cases or over time.
- Assess how well local safeguarding systems and multi-agency practices operated whilst considering timeliness, appropriateness and impact of interventions
- Reflection on practice and learning by including insights and reflections from practitioners and agencies involve.
- Learning points are captured and used to inform and improve future practice.
- Recommendations for improvement are assigned, clear, and set with realistic timescales
- The report uses clear and jargon-free language and is structured and accessible for a wide audience, including professionals and the public.
- Is aligned with relevant legislation, guidance and statutory frameworks.

The report should also:

- Include clearly defined review questions that need addressing, ensuring the purpose and focus are clear from the outset.
- Clearly state the key learning points and outlines specific actionable steps to support ongoing learning and improvement learning points and steps for learning.
- Be written in such a way that it can be published with minimal redaction.

The CSPR overview report should first be signed off by the CSPR Panel. The report should be then tabled/shared at the Learning & Review Strategic Group and shared with the Independent Scrutineer, to support quality assurance and allow for appropriate challenge of the findings. At this stage, the report should have clearly identified and referenced areas of learning.

The Learning & Review Strategic Group is responsible for working collaboratively to formulate an action plan. Once the action plan is agreed, the Chair will present the final report and recommendations to TSCP Board for approval.

TSCP Board holds overall responsibility for determining how to respond to the identifies recommendations arising from the CSPR. This will include:

- Agreeing on the required actions
- Assigning responsibilities to individual agencies or coordinating a multi-agency response, if appropriate. to identify and agree how practice challenges or recommendations from the CSPR will be responded to and what action is needed by individual agencies or from a multi-agency perspective.

Learning from CSPR

The value of CSPRs is in the learning derived from them. To maximise their impact, it is important that sufficient time and resources are given to act upon the recommendations. Recommendations should follow the should SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

To ensure that learning is fully embedded and leads to meaningful change, the following principles should be applied:

- **Demonstrate the learning process:** The review should clearly reflect a structured and thoughtful learning exercise.
- **Disseminate key findings:** Carefully consider what information needs to be shared, how it should be communicated, and who the intended audience is.
- **Share good practice and areas for improvement:** Highlight both effective practices and those requiring change to support continuous improvement.
- **Focus recommendations:** Limit recommendations to a small number of key areas, each with clear, actionable proposals and defined outcomes.
- **Monitor implementation:** Ensure robust oversight of the action plan to confirm that changes are implemented and sustained.

- **Engage the community and media:** Use communication channels to raise awareness of the positive work being done by services supporting children.
- **Clarify expectations:** Ensure that colleagues and partners understand what to expect during and after a CSPR.

SCRUTINY AND CHALLENGE

Under Working Together (2023), the criteria for CSPR provides greater flexibility for safeguarding partners to determine how best to generate learning. External scrutiny of these decisions is provided by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel through the submission of Rapid Review reports. TSCP will also seek input from the Independent Scrutineer.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel may recommend that a local panel reconsider its decision. They may also choose to initiate a national review based on a local case, particularly where it reflects emerging national trends. In such cases, the local CSPR Panel should continue to review feedback and reassess their original decision. Even if a local CSPR is not initiated, the panel may still support the national review by hosting a national reviewer and facilitating local learning events, as directed. This process will be coordinated by the TSCP Business Unit.

If new information emerges or a local review indicates the need for a national review, the screening panel will reconvene and involve the Independent Scrutineer. The Safeguarding Business Manager, in collaboration with panel members, will present proposals to the Tameside Safeguarding Children Partnership Board for a final decision. All reconsiderations will be reported to the National Panel once a decision is made.

The Safeguarding Business Manager will monitor actions arising from Rapid Review decisions to ensure completion. Agencies are expected to demonstrate that learning has been implemented, which will be reviewed through the Learning & Review Strategic Group.

Prior to publication, TSCP will engage with the individual(s) involved as well as their families and carers, where appropriate, ensuring sensitivity and transparency. TSCP Business Manager will coordinate publication, including uploading the report onto the TSCP website and issuing a formal statement to inform partners and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Media and communication will usually be co-ordinated by the Council's communications team. This will be carried out in collaboration with other agencies involved and designated representatives of the partnership, ensuring a unified and consistent approach.

PROFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES AND ESCALATION

If an agency believes their request for a Rapid Review or local CSPR has not been appropriately considered or met, they can raise a concern. Should an agency disagree with a decision made by TSCP, they have the right to challenge it through the escalation process and by involving the Independent Scrutineer.

Where a professional is dissatisfied with decisions or processes related to case review activity, they can refer to Greater Manchester [resolving professional differences escalation policy](#). Requests can be submitted by emailing TSCP@tameside.gov.uk

Where a complaint is received from a member of the public, regarding a TSCP decision or review the following steps will be followed:

- In consultation with the relevant Head of Service, TSCP Business Manager will provide a written response within 20 working days from receipt.
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Business Manager who will arrange for the complaint to be reviewed by the most appropriate person.

- All written responses will include information on how to contact the Local Government Ombudsman.