



Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

21st May 2021

Dear Safeguarding Partners,

As you will probably be aware, the independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's annual report was published on Friday 14th May 2021. Please find a copy of the report attached.

Alongside this, we have published two supplementary reports:

- An [analysis of safeguarding partners' yearly reports](#) with the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care.
- A commissioned report on Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Rapid Reviews undertaken by the University of East Anglia and Birmingham University.

These are available to download online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safeguarding-practice-review-panel-annual-report-2020>

1. Annual report 2020

This is the Panel's second annual report, covering our work from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020. It sets out our views about how effectively the system of reviews across England, including Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), is operating. We have drawn together the information from serious incident notifications and rapid reviews, illuminated by learning from the Panel's national reviews and wider analysis of local reviews.

The report indicates that there is a real need for all agencies involved in safeguarding children to address some of the stubborn challenges which have too often undermined high quality child protection practice; these issues include weak information sharing and risk assessment.

The Panel is therefore prioritising risk assessment and decision making in our 2021 work programme. That said, we know that addressing some of these seemingly perennial issues in safeguarding will be challenging; they involve complex and often long standing issues. We will be working closely with stakeholders to see how these issues might be best addressed; we will keep you closely in touch as the work develops. Mark Gurrey and Karen Manners (Panel members) are leading this work.

2. Ethnicity and cultural competence

The annual report has highlighted how sometimes the ethnicity of a child and family is not specified in reviews, even when this information has been included in the original serious incident notification. Very importantly too, there is limited evidence that ethnicity, culture, race and identity are being addressed in reviews; this has the effect of impeding effective evaluation of practice and system learning.

We know that it is vital to children's well-being and protection that safeguarding practice pays good regard to the impact of these important influences on children's lives. We have seen examples of rapid reviews and LCSPRs where these issues have been addressed and integrated in a very sensitive and reflective way. However, our evidence suggests that in too

many reviews, the impact of culture, race and ethnicity on parenting, on children's experiences and on professional responses is not well considered or evidenced. This represents a missed opportunity for system learning.

The Panel is keen to work with safeguarding partners to secure better consideration of these issues in both national and local reviews. We invite you to reflect on these issues as they may affect local practice; in the meantime, the Panel is looking at how national reviews might take better account of ethnicity and cultural competence issues.

3. Quality of reporting and rapid reviews

The annual report contains information about the quality of reporting and rapid reviews, drawn from the commissioned analysis undertaken by the University of East Anglia and University of Birmingham.

It notes that well-conducted rapid reviews, with challenge and direction from senior leaders, identify immediate learning and how and when it will be disseminated across the partnership. These reviews provide a clear rationale for the decision to initiate an LCSPR and have analysis of areas that require further exploration. We have also seen good examples of partnerships using the learning and reflective questions from national reviews as a starting point to inform their own analysis. Unfortunately, in too many of the rapid reviews that we see, the analysis does not inform either immediate learning or a clear rationale for the aspects to review in an LCSPR. The focus is on what happened, rather than why it happened.

Rapid reviews sometimes suggest an alternative process to an LCSPR. The detailed arrangements for these alternative review processes are not always clear nor how their impact will be evaluated. If a rapid review has indicated that there is more multi agency learning to be gained, safeguarding partnerships should move to an LCSPR. There are no other types of review needed or allowed for in Working Together 2018.

The rapid review and LCSPR case studies within the commissioned report provide useful information and should hopefully assist safeguarding partners in developing their approach to reviews.

Regional links with Safeguarding Partners

In my previous letter, I explained that the Panel is very committed to promoting effective two-way dialogue between local Safeguarding Partnerships (SPs) and the Panel. We are taking two specific actions to support this.

Firstly, we have now assigned a Panel member to link to each region in England.

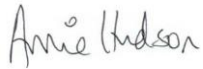
- North West – Karen Manners
- North East – Dale Simon
- Yorkshire and Humber – Annie Hudson
- West Midlands – Peter Sidebotham
- East Midlands – Peter Sidebotham
- East of England – Susan Tranter
- South West – Sarah Elliott
- South East – Dale Simon
- London – Mark Gurrey

The role will involve the Panel member developing links with SPs in each region; this might involve conversations about general or specific issues relating to the Panel's work and speaking at regional events. We keep these arrangements under review and welcome your feedback in due course on how they are working.

Secondly, you will recall that we have commissioned YouGov to undertake a survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews with safeguarding partners, as well as with delegated officers, and partnership business managers and independent chairs (where applicable). YouGov will shortly be in contact to begin this research. We would appreciate your engagement with the researchers so we can understand better the impact of the Panel's work and make changes as necessary.

I hope that this letter provides useful information. Please do not hesitate to contact me via mailbox.nationalreviewpanel@education.gov.uk if you would like to discuss any particular issues of concern or interest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annie Hudson".

Annie Hudson,

Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel