



CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE SIGNIFICANT CASES REVIEW PANEL

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The new national guidance on Child Protection Committee's states:

Promotion of Good Practice

3.8 CPCs have a responsibility to identify and promote good practice, address issues of poor practice and encourage learning from practice. Each CPC will:

1. Have in place mechanisms to identify and disseminate lessons from past and current practice, including systematic reviews of significant cases;
2. Ensure that these lessons directly inform training and staff development; and
3. Identify opportunities to share these lessons more widely.

1.2 Inter-agency review of significant cases is an important way to identify and improve on inter-agency practice. Such review allows inter-agency guidelines and agreements to be evaluated and allows areas requiring guidelines and agreements to be identified.

1.3 Cases where they have had tragic consequences for the children are likely to require review. Individual agencies may have responsibilities to report to the Scottish Executive regarding the death of a child who has been registered on the Child Protection Register or subject to a supervision requirement at the time of death.

1.4 Cases where there has been significant inter-agency involvement and co-operation with or without a tragic outcome for children are an important source of good practice. Review of such cases can inform the development or improvement of inter-agency guidelines.

1.5 Individual agencies may conduct internal management reviews of cases independently of any inter-agency review. Such reviews will inform inter-agency review.

2.0 THE PURPOSE OF SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

- 2.1 The Purpose of significant case review carried out under this guidance is:
- To establish whether there are lessons to be learned from a case about the way in which local professionals and agencies work together to safeguard children
 - To identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon, and what is expected to change as a result
 - To improve inter-agency working and better safeguard children
- 2.2 Where a child has died, significant case review is not an enquiry into how a child died or who is culpable; that is a matter for a Fatal Accident Inquiry and the courts to determine as appropriate.
- 2.3 Disciplinary or other action that is required as a result of an agency's own internal management review is a matter for each agency to determine as appropriate.

3.0 CIRCUMSTANCES FOR A REVIEW TO TAKE PLACE.

- 3.1 A Child Protection Committee *should always undertake* a review when a child dies who was registered on the Child Protection Register for the local authority. This includes death by suicide and death where abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor.
- 3.2 A Child Protection Committee *should always consider whether to undertake* a case review where a child has sustained a potentially life threatening injury through abuse or neglect, serious sexual abuse, or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development through abuse or neglect, and the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services work together to safeguard the child.
- 3.3 A Child Protection Committee *may also consider whether to undertake* a case review where there has been a significant inter-agency planning and working in a case and new protocols, procedures or guidance may be required to ensure dissemination of the good or new practice undertaken.

4.0 INSTIGATING A SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

- 4.1 Any agency or professional may refer a case to the Child Protection Committee if it is believed that there are important lessons for inter-agency working to be learned from the case.
- 4.2 Where a referral is made to the Child Protection Committee, the Chair of the Committee should inform members of the committee of the referral. The Chair should confirm that the matter is to be passed to the Significant Case Review Panel, a sub group of the Child Protection Committee.
- 4.3 The Chair of the Child Protection Committee should refer the case to the Significant Case Review Panel in writing outlining the reasons indicated for the review.

5.0 OVERLAPS WITH OTHER INVESTIGATIONS

- 5.1 There needs to be clarity over the interface between the different processes of *investigation*, including criminal investigations; *case management*, including help for abused children and immediate measures to ensure that other children are safe; and *review*, including learning lessons from the case to lessen the likelihood of such events happening again. The different processes should inform each other.
- 5.2 In many cases it will be possible to undertake inter-agency review and to identify lessons and take action required without risk of contamination of witnesses in criminal proceedings or prejudice to any related proceedings.
- 5.3 Where criminal investigation is ongoing or criminal proceedings under consideration or active, any proposals for review should be agreed with those leading criminal investigations or responsible for criminal proceedings, to make sure that proceedings are not prejudiced. In some cases, it may not be possible to complete a review until after a Fatal Accident Inquiry or criminal proceedings have been concluded. The decision to proceed with a Significant case review will be agreed by the Significant Case Review Panel.

6.0 SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW PANEL

- 6.1 The Significant Case Review Panel (SCRCP) will comprise of permanent members of the Child Protection Committee and will include representation from Health, social work, SCRA, Education, Poliel.
- 6.2 The Significant Case Review Panel members may conduct initial investigations or a small-scale audit which confirms that inter-agency review is not required. This may be despite internal agency reviews that result in the need for further internal action within the agency. A decision by the Significant Cases Review Panel, that there should not

be an inter-agency review should be made as a recommendation to the Child Protection Committee immediately.

- 6.3 Where it is agreed that a significant case review is required, the Significant Case Review Panel will be responsible for
- 6.3.1 Identifying a Case Review Group comprising of the relevant agencies.
- The Panel may require wider or different membership for an individual review. This will be dependent on the needs of the case to be reviewed or as information emerges during the review.
 - Permanent members of the Panel may initially require some time to consult within their own agency or beyond to identify the most appropriate person or persons to become involved in a review of a particular case.
- 6.3.2 Agreeing timescales for the completion of the review
- See separate section on timescales
- 6.3.3 Appointing a Chair for the Case Review Group
- The Chair of the Case Review group should be from an agency with no or minimum apparent involvement with the case under review. Where this is not possible the Child Protection Lead Officer should Chair the Case Review group.
- 6.3.4 Advising the Child Protection Committee if an external/independent review is required
- There may be features of a case, which indicate that all or any part of the review process should involve, or be conducted by, a party independent of the agencies or professionals that are required to participate in the review.
 - Any proposals in this respect will require the specific prior approval of the Child Protection Committee.
- 6.3.5 Agreeing the scope of the review process.
- Clear terms of reference should be drawn up for each review.
- 6.3.6 Reviewing Progress of Case Review Group
- In conjunction with the Child Protection Lead Officer, the Significant Case Review Panel should ensure Case Review Group are meeting regularly and that agreed action points are being progressed timeously.

7.0 CASE REVIEW GROUP

- 7.1 The Case Review Group (CRG) will consist of appropriate representation from the relevant agencies and will be responsible for:
 - 7.1.1 The completion of single agency reports outlining their own agency's involvement in the case (see below for further details)
 - 7.1.2 The scrutiny of said reports and the compilation of a report to the Significant Case Review Panel identifying both the single agency and inter-agency issues and recommended action points arising.
 - 7.1.3 The Chair of the Case Review Group should meet with the Significant case Review panel to discuss the report and agreement should be reached on a clear Lead identified for progressing action points
 - 7.1.4 The completed report should then be reported back to the Child Protection Committee for final approval

8.0 SINGLE AGENCY REVIEW MECHANISMS

- 8.1 Each agency participating in the review should have an agreed internal review mechanism.
- 8.2 This will allow agencies to satisfy their responsibilities to conduct internal management reviews of cases independent of any inter-agency review and also contribute to an inter-agency review if appropriate.
- 8.3 Single agency reviews should have an agreed timescale and reporting format
- 8.4 Any single agency review should be reported to and considered by the appropriate senior management forum and any necessary recommendations actioned.
- 8.5 Where a single agency review is completed but not as part of significant case review a summary of key points and action plan should be reported to the Child Protection Committee.

9.0 REPORTING FORMAT OF SINGLE AGENCY REVIEWS TO SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW

- 9.1 Agencies contributing to a significant case review should ensure that reports include the following information
 - i. Introduction
 - ii. Family Composition and involvement with agency
 - iii. Level of agency's involvement (to include all the services provided by agency)

- iv. Chronology of contact (to include dates and brief description of contact)
- v. History of agency's involvement (to include focus of agency's involvement, intra agency communication etc)
- vi. Key single agency issues
- vii. Key inter agency issues
- viii. Conclusion/Action points

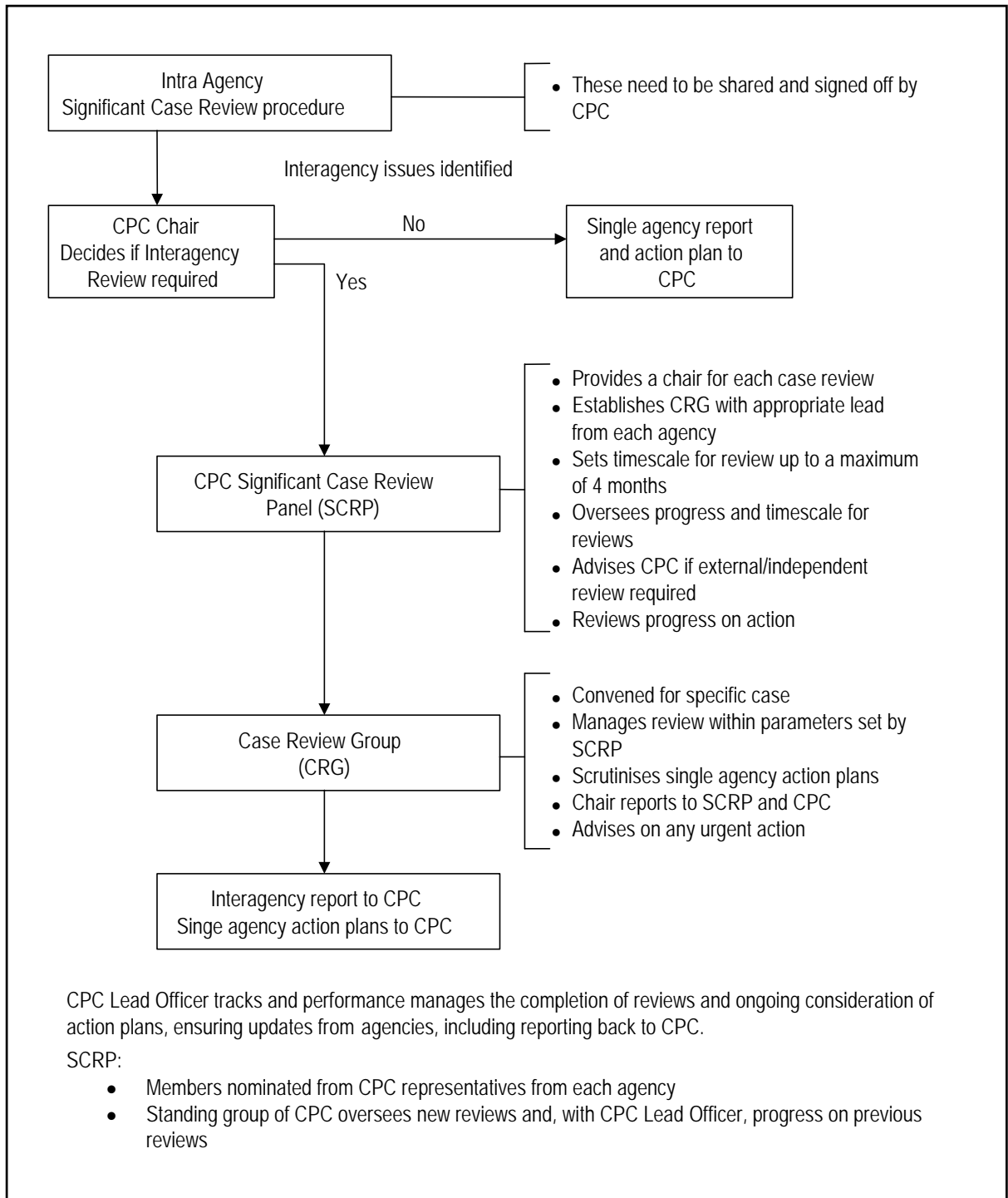
10.0 REPORTING FORMAT TO THE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

- 10.1 Once a significant review is brought back to the Significant Case Review Panel, the recommendations should be considered and agreed and a final report submitted to the Child Protection Committee for final approval.
- 10.2 The report brought back to the Committee must remain confidential to Committee members and any wider distribution of the report should be agreed by the Committee prior to distribution. (This includes abridged or anonymised versions).
- 10.3 The Report to the Committee must include:
 - i. Brief anonymised overview of the case
 - ii. Summary of inter-agency involvement (Not full chronology)
 - iii. Identification of key issues around single agency processes
 - iv. Identification of key issues around inter-agency processes
 - v. Recommendations - including single agency action points

11.0 MONITORING/IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION POINTS

- 11.1 Whilst single agencies will be responsible for implementing any internal action points (e.g. training, alert systems etc), the Committee should ensure that there is a process in place to review these and where necessary progress shared action points (e.g. inter-agency training, referral processes, protocols etc).
- 11.2 Any action point should have lead responsibility and timescales clearly identified.
- 11.3 On completion of the significant case review the Significant case Review Panel should agree on a timescale for implementation of action points and reporting back to the Committee.
- 11.4 The Child Protection Lead officer will be responsible for liaising with the relevant lead agencies to ensure the implementation of action points and reporting back to the Committee on the progress of these.

12.0 SIGNIFICANT CASE REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS



13.0 CASES KNOWN TO MORE THAN ONE CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE AREA

- 13.1 Where more than one Child Protection Committee has knowledge of a child referred for review, the Committee of the area in which the child is or was normally resident should take lead responsibility for conducting the review. Any other Committee that has an interest or involvement in the case should be included as partners in jointly planning and undertaking
- 13.2 In the case of looked after children, the responsible authority should exercise lead responsibility for conducting any review, again involving other Child Protection Committees who have an interest or involvement.

14.0 REVIEW BY THE SIGNIFICANT CASES REVIEW PANEL

- 14.1 Where more than one case is referred to the Significant Cases Review Panel at one time, the Panel may need to prioritise reviews. Circumstances which may be relevant to a case being considered, to be more urgently considered than another include; the child being looked after by the local authority, the child's name being or previously being on the Child Protection Register, the child being or previously being in an institutional setting, e.g. a school, nursery or family centre when concerns occurred.

15.0 TIMING

- 15.1 Reviews will vary widely in their breadth and complexity, but in all cases lessons should be learned and acted upon as quickly.
- 15.2 Within *one month* of a case coming to the attention of the Child Protection Committee there should be a decision on whether a review should take place.
- 15.3 Individual reviews should be completed within a further *four months*, unless an alternative timescale is agreed with the Child Protection Committee.
- 15.4 Sometimes the complexity of a case does not become apparent until a review is in progress. As soon as it emerges that a review cannot be completed within four months of the decision to initiate it, there should be discussion with the Child Protection Committee to agree a timescale for completion.