Cheshire East Local
Safeguarding Children Board

Multi-Agency Reflective Review

Policy and procedure

Version 4; February 2016

Review; February 2017

When should Cheshire East LSCB undertake multi-agency reflective reviews?

Introduction:

Safeguarding children is an area that benefits from learning. Strong feedback loops are necessary within the multi-agency work environment in order to understand how the service is operating, and to identify any strengths and weaknesses. We cannot assume that simply following procedures is a good enough test of performance. Even when a procedure has good knowledge behind it, it may be less productive in a real world setting where it interacts with other variables.

In order to strengthen the safeguarding arrangements for children and to further develop the ethos of a learning culture Cheshire East LSCB has arrangements in place to hold **multi-agency reflective reviews**. The development of this approach has been prompted by the expectation that agencies take every opportunity to learn from our experiences of working together and to improve safeguarding arrangements for our children and young people. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) and Eileen Munro's work[1] in respect of children's safeguarding reinforces this approach. Munro identifies that the agencies which manage risk effectively are those which have early warning systems to detect problems, and put in place regulatory actions quickly to repair weakness in the system. The system is always therefore on alert to action to improve efficiency and functioning.

Aim and Purpose of Multi-Agency Reflective Reviews

There are cases which come to light where **Serious Case Reviews** (SCR's) must be conducted, and follow a statutory process, there are also critical incidents or near miss cases which warrant the same, wider formal multi-agency review process. The decision to hold such reviews is made by the serious case review panel made up of LSCB members from the relevant agencies. They will nominate a Chair to lead the Review following the process outlined on the procedures page of the LSCB website and in the online Pan Cheshire Procedures.

It is intended that multi-agency reflective reviews will operate within this context, and sit under these processes. Multi-agency reflective reviews can be conducted speedily and cost effectively, harnessing the high level of willingness of professionals to critically reflect and learn. Cases will be identified where there is significant learning to be gained across the multi-agency network, but where the criteria for an SCR are not met. Weaknesses or faults in the system can be identified quickly through individual cases, and action plans for improvement drawn up quickly. Reflective reviews can be conducted at any point and do not have to be delayed pending the outcome of any continuing activity/ investigation.

The decision to conduct a reflective review must be proportionate to the case, meet the criteria and have the potential for lessons to be learnt and improvements to be made. Cases that can provide insights into the way that agencies work together, can be considered for multi-agency reflective reviews across a broad continuum, from

[1] *The Munro Review of Child Protection Part One: A systems analysis (2010)*

those that fall below the threshold for undertaking a serious case review to those deemed to demonstrate capacity for practitioners across agencies to improve how they work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Cases will be considered in relation to a specific incident or a culmination of circumstances, or recurring themes, in order to drive improvements and preserve and enhance good practice.

The procedures contained in this document should be followed in circumstances where the CE LSCB Chair has agreed to follow the recommendations of the case review panel to conduct a multi-agency reflective review.

The purpose of the review is to:

- Establish what lessons are to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children that will impact on practice beyond the circumstances of the case. This includes evidence of good practice
- Identify clearly what those lessons are, both within and between agencies, and how and within what timescales they will be acted on, who will lead and what is expected to change as a result, and how we will know
- Improve intra- and inter-agency working and better safeguard and promote the welfare of children

There is an assumption that the Board would seek to publish the findings of any reflective review, and where appropriate the views/experience of the children and their family are sought.

It is anticipated that these reviews will not depend on the completion of complex chronologies and detailed agency reports, but that the most appropriate representative at a sufficiently senior level from each agency involved will come to a Reflective review meeting appropriately appraised to inform the review of their agency involvement, having read the case file and possibly spoken to the staff involved.

The person chairing the Reflective review meeting will need a brief overview report outlining the agency's involvement with the family and highlighting any **significant events, good practice or concerns** (as set out in Appendix 1)**.** This report should be sent **ten** working days before the Reflective review meeting.

The Reflective review meeting will involve the key agencies, who will use the reports as a vehicle for interagency scrutiny, review and discussion. The Chair of the Reflective review meeting will facilitate the group to focus on the key areas for reflection and learning. Consequently the reviews will have a less bureaucratic process around them and there will be minimal delay before the necessary corrective action is put in place.

The provision of multi-agency reflective reviews will enhance transparency and openness, but also provide opportunities for appropriate challenge and peer scrutiny. In addition, it is hoped that these reviews will highlight good practice and stimulate a positive learning culture.

It is essential that any lessons learned are disseminated quickly. There will be a clear line of accountability for the monitoring of any actions that are agreed as part of the Reflective review action plan. The report and action plan will then come to the Audit & Case Review sub group for scrutiny and the action plan ratified and tracked.

Criteria for Multi-Agency Reflective Review

Practitioners and managers should keep an open mind in relation to cases where significant learning could be achieved on a multi- agency basis. This process is in addition to any single agency audits or reviews that may take place on individual cases. Any professional or agency may refer a case to the LSCB for a reflective review if they believe that there are important lessons for intra/inter-agency working to be learnt.

These criteria are essential;

- The child has died or experienced significant harm through abuse or neglect AND the criteria are NOT met for a Serious Case Review (SCR)*.

AND

- There is evidence that a multi-agency reflective review would promote new learning across the multi-agency network. This would include examples of good practice as well as areas for development.
- It is also possible that the CDOP may also identify cases that they consider should be referred to the LSCB for a reflective review

Process

- Any agency or practitioner can notify the LSCB of a case to be considered for a reflective review after **appropriate consultation** with his/her line manager or agency designated safeguarding lead where it is believed that the criteria may be met.
- The need for referral to this process should be a consideration at the culmination of all rapid response meetings
- The referrer **must complete** the Referral form at Appendix 1 with sufficient details that the case can be discussed by the case review panel**.**
- This referral form will be passed to the Chair of the Audit & Case review group via the LSCB business unit.
- All agency leads with significant involvement in the case will be notified and asked to prepare and to take part in a case review panel meeting.
- This case review panel meeting will consider the referral form and make a decision on whether the criteria is met to hold a Reflective review, and if so nominate a Chair to lead the Reflective review.

- The Chair of the Audit & Case review group will notify the LSCB chair of the recommendation and seek approval.
- The group will also advise if notification to Ofsted or the National Panel of experts (NPE) is recommended.
- The nominated Chair for the Reflective Review will decide who is needed to attend – this would normally involve first line managers and possibly practitioners across the relevant agencies to ensure that any obstacles or process that promote achieving best practice are fully understood.
- The LSCB business unit will arrange a date and venue for the multi-agency Reflective review meeting.
- The Reflective review will consist of **one** meeting
- The Reflective review Chair will decide the most appropriate person to inform the family that a Reflective review is taking place and how the views of the family will be brought to the meeting
- The appropriate representative for each agency should fully review the case, meet with staff as appropriate and produce a report using the template in Appendix 2.
- The review should be conducted in full collaboration with the practice staff involved, with a view to reflective learning.
- Multi-agency safeguarding leads will draw on their preparatory work to contribute to discussions about shortcomings and areas for improvement in their agency, as well as being able to identify good practice and strengths. They will establish what learning points have been drawn from the discussion and will draw up recommendations.
- The Reflective review meeting will be facilitated by the LSCB Business Unit independent of the case to ensure management of the discussion and accurate recording.
- A report setting out the review findings and recommendations will be produced by the Reflective review chair. This report will be presented to the Audit and Case Review subgroup, who will track the progress of the recommendations.
- The Chair will set out how the findings will be fed back to the family and workers directly involved with the child/ren – see below

Approach to the review

The principles for a Reflective review are that it should:

- Recognise the complex circumstances in which professionals work together to safeguard children;
- Seek to understand in the areas of focus, who did what and the underlying reasons that led individuals and organisations to act as they did;
- Seek to understand practice from the viewpoint of the individuals and

organisations; involved at the time rather than using hindsight;
- Be transparent about the way data is collected and analysed; and
- Make use of relevant research and case evidence to inform the findings.

Methodology

The model should help identify which factors in the work environment support good practice, and which create unsafe conditions in which poor safeguarding practice is more likely. It should produce organisational learning that is vital to improving the quality of work with families and the ability of services to keep children safe.

It supports an analysis that goes beyond identifying what happened to explain why it did so – recognising that actions or decisions may have seemed sensible at the time they were taken.

It involves moving beyond the basic facts of a case and appreciating the views of people from different agencies and professions.

It is a collaborative model for case reviews – those directly involved in the case are centrally and actively involved in the analysis and development of recommendations.

Types of recommendations from these reviews:

1. **Issues with clear cut solutions that can be addressed locally and by all relevant agencies** e.g. creating a consistent rule across agencies of when and why to copy someone in to a letter rather than addressing the letter to them directly.
2. **Issues where solutions cannot be so precise because competing priorities and inevitable resource constraints mean there are no easy answers** e.g. if we want more attention to be given to the critical aspects of the supervisor's role, we cannot assume spare capacity. Such decisions are the responsibility of the senior management.
3. **Issues that require further research and development in order to find solutions, including those that would need to be addressed at a national level** e.g. addressing problems identified in new software would require experimentation to find solutions through more user-centered design.

Dissemination of Lessons and feedback to staff and family

- The Chair of the Reflective review meeting will provide a report detailing the outcome and learning to the Audit and Case Review Sub Group (A&CR).
- Once the Sub group has approved the report, recommendations and action plan it will be presented to the LSCB Executive who will decide the most effective way for disseminating the findings on a wider basis. A copy of the report will also be shared with all the front-line practitioners and managers directly involved in the review.
- The Reflective review Chair will feedback to the family, with a lead professional known to them if this is more appropriate.

- The LSCB Executive will make a decision in respect of publishing the findings on the LSCB website
- It is envisaged that single agency learning will also be disseminated down through agencies using their own training pathways.
- Once the report has been approved, the A&CR sub group will be responsible for ensuring that the recommendations are implemented and will report final sign off against all actions to the LSCB Executive

Appendix 1
Referral form

LSCB Multi-agency Reflective Review
Referral to case review panel

Any agency or professional can request a Multi-Agency Reflective Review by completing this form.
All requests will be passed to the Chair of Audit & Case Review group who in consultation with the LSCB chair will convene a case review panel.

Your name Name of agency/organisation making referral Your contact details Email/phone		
	Name	Date of Birth
Name of Child/ren		
Date of incident		
Family Details (including absent fathers and significant relatives) *continue on separate sheet if necessary*		
Name		
Relationship to the Child		
Date of Birth		
Address		
Name		
Relationship to the Child		
Date of Birth		
Address		

Factual Contextual Summary

Provide a brief factual and contextual summary of your Agency's involvement with the child/family/carer and/or service user:

Rapid response minutes should be attached, where relevant

Appendix 1
Referral Form

Referral Form – M u l t i -Agency Reflective Review

Brief referral details:
Outline the reasons for the multi-agency reflective review request. *Please note that the report should not exceed one side of A4 paper. If any additional information is required you will be contacted.*

Criteria for review – please tick box:

Case does not meet the Serious Case Review (SCR)* threshold *See Working Together 2015		
Has been has been referred for a multi-agency review by the SCR panel		
The Safeguarding lead for an agency/organisation considers that a multi- agency would promote learning for the multi-agency network		
Name and Signature		
Date		

Professionals and agencies involved

Name	Designation/ agency	Dates/period of Involvement, if known	Type of involvement

Please complete and return this form to: The LSCB Business Unit
LSCB Business Unit First Floor, Westfields *Sandbach CW11 1HZ* Email: LSCB@cheshireeast.gcsx.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Report Template

What will happen at the Reflective Review meeting?

The Multi-agency reflective review meeting will form an analysis of involvement.

The Review chair will facilitate analysis of involvement and will consider the events that occurred, the decisions made, and the actions taken or not.

Where judgements were made, or actions taken, which indicate that practice or management could be improved, the meeting will try to get an understanding not only of what happened, but why.

What do I need to provide?

When it has been agreed to hold a Reflective review meeting, all agency representatives involved with the family will need to provide a report.

This report should be sent to the LSCB Business Unit **two weeks** before the date of the review meeting.

The following template should be used;

Report Template*;*

Date:

Author:

Agency/Organisation:

Name of child/family:

Dates of your involvement/work with the child/family:

Involvement with family*; brief overview of your agency's involvement?*

Text*; Were practitioners sensitive to the needs of the child in their work, knowledgeable about potential indicators of abuse or neglect?*

Specifically*; Were practitioners clear about what to do if they had concerns about a vulnerable child?*

Consider; *What were the key relevant points/ opportunities for assessment and decision making in this case in relation to the vulnerable child?*

Evidence; Do *assessments and decisions appear to have been reached in an informed and professional way?*

Recording*; Did action accord with assessments and decisions made? Were appropriate services offered/provided or relevant enquiries made, in the light of assessments?*

Planning; *Where relevant, were appropriate Safeguarding Children safeguarding plans or care plans in place, reviewing processes complied with?*

Voice of the child; *When, and in what way, were the child's wishes and feelings ascertained and considered? Was this information recorded?*

Practice: *Was practice sensitive to the racial, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the vulnerable child?*

Challenge; *Were more senior managers, or other agencies and professionals, involved at points where they should have been*?

Policy ; *Was the work in this case consistent with agency and Safeguarding policy and procedures for protecting vulnerable children, and wider professional standards?*

Additionally: - *Are there are any particular features of this case that are considered to require further comment.*

What do we learn from this case? - *Are there lessons from this case for the way in which agencies work together?*

Is there good practice to highlight, *as well as ways in which practice can be improved?*

Are there implications for ways of working; training (single and inter-agency); management and supervision; working in partnership with other agencies; resources?

Recommendations for action

What action should be taken to address the issues?

What outcomes should these actions bring and how it will be reviewed.

Finally:

Please add any other comments or information that the Multi-agency reflective review meeting needs to consider

Appendix 3

Flowchart of review System

Any Agency can make a referral within 28 days of identifying a case (Agreement obtained from your Safeguarding Lead)

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Complete Referral Form appendix 1
(NB; remember to include the reasons why the case should be considered for a review)

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Send the Referral Form to
LSCB@cheshireeast.gcsx.gov.uk

→ LSCB Business unit will inform the Chair of Audit & Case Review group (who will inform LSCB chair) within 2 working days

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Case Review Panel will review if the criteria have been met and nominate a chair to lead the review undertaken at the Audit and Case Review Sub Group

← LSCB Business unit will convene a case review meeting to review the referral

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A Reflective review will be convened within 28 working days following a decision by the case review panel and/or decision by LSCB Chair

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All agencies that are invited to attend must provide a report two weeks before the date of the Reflective review

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Reflective Review held and issues identified

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Recommendations and action plan with timeline sent to Audit and Case review Sub Group

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Findings reported to the LSCB exec and reported back to LSCB and other subgroups as required