

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership



Serious Incident Notification Arrangements

Under Working Together guidance the local Safeguarding Partners must have a process in place to identify, review and respond to serious safeguarding incidents that are referred to the partners for consideration of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR).

16C (1) of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) states:

Where a local authority in England knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (National Panel) if –

- a) The child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority's area, or
- b) While normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England. (This includes Wales)

Serious Harm Guidance 2020 - GOV.UK

The draft updated Panel Guidance July 2022 states: Is it serious? Often the judgement on whether the level of harm to a child is serious is quite straight forward. This may be because the child has a life-changing injury, long-term impairment resulting from an injury, or an injury that is clearly life-threatening, for example, requiring resuscitation or intensive care treatment. However, some incidents are not so clear and, in these circumstances, a judgement about seriousness is likely to be made. In cases of physical injury which are neither life-threatening, nor life-changing, consideration should be given to the extent, persistence and severity of the injuries sustained and any ongoing context of wider neglect or abuse. Isolated bruises or limb fractures in infants or children would not normally be considered serious unless accompanied by internal injuries (e.g. abusive head trauma, abdominal injuries) or are of a degree or extent likely to be life-threatening or life changing. In cases of sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse consideration should be given to the extent, persistence, and severity of the abuse, how this may have impacted on the child's development and well-being, and any likely long-term psychological harm, bearing in mind the child's development and any other contextual factors.

The OASys risk assessment tool: Defines "serious harm" as: "an event which is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, can be expected to be "difficult or impossible".

The question posed in all SIN Decision Group discussions is whether a safeguarding incident notification should be submitted in respect of a child/ren and if the SIN Decision group feel that the child/ren suffered 'serious harm' as defined above.

Notification Process & Timescales

The local authority must submit a Serious Incident Notification (SIN) for any event that meets the above criteria to the (National) Panel. They should do so within five working days of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. The local authority should also report the event to the safeguarding partners in their area (and in other areas if appropriate) within five working days.

The Integrated Care Board, Constabulary and all relevant agencies will bring to the Local Authority's attention any incidents that they feel meet threshold for notification promptly in order to meet the statutory timeframe of 5 working Days from being aware of the incident.

All notifications should be made to the GSCP Business Unit via email with the relevant detail to allow effective and prompt communication to the SIN Decision Group

Multi-Agency Notifications to the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel

Serious Incident Notifications

The statutory guidance on Serious Incident Notifications to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is set out in the Children Act 2004, 16C (1) (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017).

The GSCP Executive, under its shared and equal duty to safeguard children, has determined that in Gloucestershire the following arrangements will form part of their Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review procedures and their Working Together published arrangements.

1. Responsibility to notify rests with the local authority, however the Executive would expect that any decision to submit a Serious Incident Notification has been discussed and agreed with the other statutory partners, the Constabulary and the Integrated Care Board prior to submission.
2. The submission of a SIN initiates a Rapid Review notification from the National Panel. A Rapid Review must therefore be convened, and a Report sent to the National Panel within 15 working days from the date of notification from the National Panel to the partnership.
3. In order to support the Rapid Review process and to ensure oversight by the QiiP a copy of the Serious Incident Notification must be sent to the GSCP Business Unit at time of submission.
4. Where a case has been identified for notification the *QiiP Subgroup* statutory partners will respond promptly to a meeting request with the nominated SIN Lead/s for the Local Authority's Childrens Social Care and the GSCP Executive Business Manager to discuss and collectively agree whether the incident meets threshold for a Serious Incident Notification.
5. All multi-agency decisions to submit a SIN will be communicated by the Business Manager or the GSCP Statutory Review Coordinator, in their absence, to the Chair of the Management Group and safeguarding leads for the statutory partners.
6. Where there is a sibling group consideration should be given as to whether all the children are notified or not: this will be dependent on whether all the children have been seriously harmed. All children notified will have to be included in any following processes such as a Rapid Review.
7. Where a collective decision cannot be reached by the SIN Decision Group this will be escalated

to the Executive by the Business Manager. The following applies in these circumstances.

8. The Local Authority as holders of the legal duty to notify can proceed with the submission of a notification or decline the decision to submit a notification
9. The GSCP Partners can decide to either proceed with a Rapid Review or communicate under the National Panels guidance which states the following “Should you decide that submission of a rapid review to the Panel is not required in this case can you please confirm in writing to the Panel that there are no concerns regarding known or suspected neglect or abuse in relation to the child”.
10. Where the joint decision is that the incident does not meet threshold, but the partners feel that the incident deserves a possible ‘after action reflective discussion’ arrangements for a referral to the GSCP QiiP Subgroup should be discussed at this point.

Note: The National Panel and the GSCP Executive accepts that circumstances will arise where an assessment of an incident may result in a difference of professional opinion, but both consider these to be the exception rather than the rule.

SIN Decision Group

Primary Quorate Members

- Integrated Care Board Designated Dr Child Safeguarding or Designated Nurse Child Safeguarding
- Gloucestershire Constabulary – Designated SIN Decision Maker
- Gloucestershire County Council Children’s Social Care – Designated SIN Submission Officer/s

Additional Specialist Representation

- Gloucestershire Health & Care - Designated SIN Decision Maker
- Gloucestershire Hospitals - Designated SIN Decision Maker

GSCP Governance –

- Chair – Quality and Improvement in Practice (QiiP)
- GSCP Business Unit Business manager or Assistant Business Manager