



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST

SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT PROCEDURE

ESSENTIAL REPORTING FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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TARGET AUDIENCE: All Northamptonshire Children's Trust staff and managers and Director of Children's Services

Senior Leadership Alert Procedure
Northamptonshire Children's Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Major incidents, situations and controversies need to be brought to the attention of the Senior leadership, NCT Chief Executive and the Directors of Children's Social Care. Directors of Children Services (DCS) hold statutory responsibility for services delivered to children and need to be made aware of major incidents, situations or controversies involving NCT services, staff, service users and buildings. Notifying DCS's will be managed by NCT's Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care.

These guidelines set out what the NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care should be notified of and the format of the notification i.e. the '[Senior Leadership Alert \(SLA\) Form](#)' or Senior Leadership Alert Form For Missing Children . These guidelines also set out the arrangements for completing and distributing the Senior Leadership Alert Form (For Missing Children) and for informing relevant stakeholders, including Lead Member/s for Children, Families and Education.

2. INCIDENTS THAT REQUIRE A SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORM

2.1 The NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care need to be informed by the most appropriate Strategic Manager (or delegated authority) concerned with the incident. This individual will need to complete the Senior Leadership Alert Form as soon as possible within one day of the incident happening. A Senior Leadership Alert Form **must be** completed for all incidents listed in section 2.2 of this procedure. The Senior Leadership Alert Form replaces the previous 'Need to Know Briefing' and 'Incident Alert Form'.

Note: It is the responsibility of the NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care to notify DCS's of incidents described in section 2.2. They will ensure an alert is completed by phone as soon as being made aware of incident, pending the Senior Leadership Alert Form be sent by email.

2.2 INCIDENTS THAT **MUST** HAVE A SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT (FOR MISSING CHILDREN SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT) FORM

- Death, serious accidents or injuries on local authority or Children's Trust premises or where a member of Children's Trust staff is present
- Death of a child where the death is unusual or unexpected
- Death of a child who has involvement with Children's Trust Services. For a child who previously had involvement with the Youth Offending Service, this extend to 20 calendar days following the end of Youth Justice Service supervision
- Death of a child in care or child in a regulated setting
- Death or serious injury of a child attending a Northamptonshire school
- Death of a care leaver for those aged up to their 25th birthday, where the local authority is aware of their care leaver status, regardless of abuse or neglect being present.
- Serious injury or harm to a child (where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)
- Serious injury or harm to a child in care or a child in a regulated setting
- A child who has involvement with the Youth Offending Service is charged with committing one of the following:
 - o Attempted murder
 - o Murder or manslaughter
 - o Rape

- o Grievous bodily harm or wounding with or without intent – section 18/20 (of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861)
- o terrorism related offences
- Any incident where a Rapid Case Review is being considered
- Any incident in a children’s home that is considered ‘serious’ (may or may not require police involvement)
- A child protection (S47) investigation that involves a child living in a children’s home has started or concluded
- Any incident where there are concerns a child living in a children’s home may be involved (or suspected of being involved) in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- An allegation of abuse has been made against a member of staff working in a children’s home
- Concerns about the conduct of staff where this is/has been a potential risk of harm to a child
- In the event of a child going missing from care where there is concern in relation to vulnerability, a separate, SLAF [for Missing](#) needs to be completed)
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2.3 INCIDENTS WHERE THERE NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERATION OF A SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORM

NCT managers need to make proportionate decisions when considering incidents to be presented for Senior Leadership Team’s awareness; this could include situations identified in the following list, but this is not meant to be directive, nor is it necessarily comprehensive, and it will be for the appropriate Strategic Manager to use their discretion – for example:

- NCT staff member is involved in a situation where there is a risk of media coverage
- A child has a communicable disease and is attending a school in Northamptonshire, or is residing in a Northamptonshire residential or foster home
- Tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) inpatient admissions

Violent incidents whilst on local authority or school premises, in the company of local authority or school staff or where there are serious implications for the staff working with that person Cases of serious communicable diseases in schools, residential or day care premises, and including foster homes

- Death or significant accidents or injuries at work (this is in addition to corporate Health and Safety procedures which should be followed in all cases of accidents at work)
- Young people’s involvement in violent incidents
- Allegations, arrests, or convictions for serious criminal offences
- Media coverage relating to members of staff where the publicity may impact on Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and / or Council/s
- Major complaints implicating Northamptonshire Children’s Trust
- Matters likely to attract local or national interest
- Any matter which has or is likely to attract the attention of the media, elected members, or Members of Parliament

- Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports of NCT delivered or commissioned services where poor performance has been identified
- Criminal trials resulting from child protection proceedings, child injury or death or large-scale child exploitation. Trials relating to fraud or other offences committed by staff
- Proceedings with potentially high financial or policy implications; for example, threat of judicial review, civil litigation for damages, employment tribunal claims etc.
- Inquests
- If the child is missing for less than 24 hours, the professional judgement of the social worker/team manager will be used to decide if a SLAF is required. If the child is missing for 24 hours or over, a SLAF for missing children must be completed (insert link).

3. COMPLETING THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORM (FOR MISSING CHILDREN)

- 3.1 If incidents identified in Section 2.2 happen, the Strategic Manager (or delegated authority) responsible for the business area involved should, wherever possible, complete the Senior Leadership Alert Form as soon as possible within one day of the incident happening. This is a managerial task and the level of detail provided must be confined to a level which will inform the NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care of the seriousness of the incident, actual or potential risk to the NCT and / or the Council/s, and of actions being taken to proactively manage the situation. It may be appropriate if the concerns are significant to alert the relevant Assistant Director or the Director of Children's Social Care of the incident by phone pending the completion of the Senior Leadership Alert Form.
- 3.2 The Senior Leadership Alert Form is in addition to and will inform any statutory Ofsted notifications that may be required. The Strategic Manager responsible for completing the Senior Leadership Alert Form must ensure all necessary details are clearly identified on the form including all details needed to inform statutory notification.
- 3.3 Where the Senior Leadership Alert Form has been completed by an NCT Children's Home, the detail of who has taken responsibility for completing it for review by the responsible Strategic Manager should be clearly identified.
- 3.4 The relevant Strategic Manager is responsible for the review of the form and further distribution.
- 3.5 The Senior Leadership Alert Form must be concise, factual, and not opinion based.

4. DECIDING WHO ELSE NEEDS TO RECEIVE THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORM

- 4.1 Relevant NCT Assistant Directors must be routinely included in all Senior Leadership Alert notifications in order that SLT shares accountability for managing the situation. Assistant Directors will therefore be in a position to deputise as needed on Senior Leadership Alert issues and can identify and act on cross-divisional / organisational implications.

- 4.2 Relevant Strategic Managers should also be copied into Senior Leadership Alert notifications. The Safeguarding Quality Assurance (SQAS) Strategic Manager and 'Need to Know' notification e-mail account (SLAFNotifications@nctrust.co.uk) must be copied into all Senior Leadership Alert notifications.
- 4.3 Where a member of staff is the subject of a Senior Leadership Alert and / or there are HR implications, the NCT Head of HR and Organisational Development must also be included.
- 4.4 The Senior Leadership Alert Form should be e-mailed to all managers involved in managing aspects of the incident.
- 4.5 The NCT Board will be notified and briefed about any matters that the NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care consider they should be made aware of, including any matters likely to attract press coverage. The initial and summary pages of the form will be used for this purpose (pages 1 – 2).

5. BRIEFING ELECTED MEMBERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 The Senior Leadership Alert Form will be used to brief Lead Members for Children, Education and Families, Children's Trust Board, and other non-operational stakeholders as required. The 'Summary' section of the Senior Leadership Alert Form provides a synopsis of the incident and key information for stakeholders
- 5.2 The Senior Leadership Alert Form may also be used to brief elected members who have an interest in the situation (for example constituency members). Elected members could be provided with the 'Summary' section of the Senior Leadership Alert Form.
- 5.3 On occasion it may be necessary to tailor the Senior Leadership Alert Form to ensure that data protection and client confidentiality are not breached. Confidentiality aspects will also need to be managed by the Directors of Children's Services that will receive information in relation to both North and West.
- 5.4 The DCS will decide if Lead Member/s for Children, Education and Families, Chief Executives of Northamptonshire North and West Councils, other senior council colleagues and elected members (including MPs) should be provided with Senior Leadership Alert information and will be responsible for informing them. If required, confidential verbal members' briefings will also be held by the DCS and Trust Chief Executive and members of the Trust SLT as necessary.
- 5.5 The DCS and NCT Chief Executive will jointly decide if NSCP Strategic Partners and Independent Scrutineer need to be provided with information from Senior Leadership Alerts and will be responsible for informing them.
- 5.7 The NCT Chief Executive will decide if the Children's Trust Chair and Board need to be provided with Senior Leadership Alerts and will be responsible for informing them.
- 5.8 The DCS, Chief Executives of North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council will decide if the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) Commissioners need to be informed.

5.9 In deciding who needs to be briefed on any incident, the following will be taken into consideration by the DCS and Trust Chief Executive:

- Seriousness and / or size of the incident
- Likelihood of local and or national media interest, taking into account any known social media activity related to the incident
- Involvement of partner organisations in the incident
- Seriousness of potential implications (including reputational and financial implications) for the Children’s Trust and / or Council

5.10 Depending on the circumstances, Senior Leadership Alerts may be used to brief Council corporate colleagues who need to be involved; for example, internal audit, fraud and investigation, health, safety and well-being. The Trust Chief Executive or delegated authority within Trust SLT will decide if this is required and will be responsible for informing them.

6. SENDING THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORMS

6.1 The Senior Leadership Alerts Form must be sent via e-mail to all addressees with ‘Senior Leadership Alert’ in the subject box and marked ‘Urgent and Confidential’. The attachment must be clearly saved with a file name and date which is recognisable when stored in electronic folders.

For example:

‘Senior Leadership Alert John Smith 1 Jan 22’ or
‘Senior Leadership Alert Update John Smith 31 March 22’ etc.

6.2 All Senior Leadership Alert Forms must be sent electronically to SLT, Strategic Manager for the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service (SQAS), the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and the Need to Know notification inbox (SLAFNotifications@nctrust.co.uk) – this inbox is monitored and the ‘SLAF’ spreadsheet is updated by Business Support. Senior Leadership Alert notifications are tracked to conclusion by the Strategic Manager for SQAS and the PSW. The author will be prompted for any updates until the matter is concluded.

6.3 Updates must be added to the original Senior Leadership Alert Form, dated and clearly identify the Manager and reviewing Strategic Manager - who may be different from the originator. In this way, an emerging picture is captured in one document for ease of reference and a defined conclusion is recorded to end the issue.

7. ACCESSING THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORM

7.1 Both Senior Leadership Alert Forms are available from the NCT Procedures Manual Local Resources. Click [here](#).

8. MONITORING OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT FORMS

8.1 The SQAS Strategic Manager and the PSW will receive a copy of every Senior Leadership Form in order to liaise with NSCP to advise, update or close as required. The SQAS Strategic Manager or PSW will use the detail in the form to manage the process of potential notification to Ofsted and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review i.e. ‘National

Panel'. This decision will be made in conjunction with Director of Children Social Care or a deputy

8.2 The monitoring of forms and subsequent updates is supported by Northamptonshire Children's Trust business support.

Procedure for Child Deaths and Serious Incidents

This document should read in conjunction with the 'Child Death and Serious Incident Flowchart'

Purpose

This document sets out the guidance and responsibilities for the notification of serious incidents and child deaths. It should be read alongside:

[Working Together To Safeguard Children](#)
[Northamptonshire SCP Procedures](#)
[The Children's Homes \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) and [The Children's Homes \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#)
<https://www.gov.uk/childrens-homes-regulations> in accordance with: [Care Standards Act \(2000\)](#)

It is a requirement that all notifiable incidents are reported to the National Panel. All notifiable incidents should be referred to the NSCP for (Rapid) Review consideration by the Strategic Manager, who will ensure they complete the NSCP Request for Consideration of Review Form. From January 2024, local authorities **should** notify the Secretary of State for Education and OFSTED of the death of a care leaver aged up to their 25th birthday as per the revisions to Working Together to Safeguard C

A notifiable incident is an incident that meets the following criteria

Where it is known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected, the local authority must notify the NSCP 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.

* 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. It should also cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment 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.

For care leavers, the notification should be made in the same way as for a Child Serious Incident Notification, via the [Child safeguarding incident notification system](#) when a care leaver is aged;

- **under 18** years of age, notifications should be made by selecting death of 'Looked after child / Care leaver child (under 18 years old)'. Please continue to select 'abuse' and/or 'neglect' or 'no abuse or neglect'. There will be an option on the 'child detail' page to identify the child as a care leaver.
- 18 years old **up to their 25th birthday**, notifications should be made by selecting death of 'Care Leaver 18 years old up to 25th birthday'.

The information requested for the death of a care leaver is less than for a child serious incident notification.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will receive the notification but will not review as their remit is children's serious incidents up to and including children aged 17. The notification of the death of a care leaver will not itself necessitate a rapid review or local child safeguarding practice review. Ofsted will also be notified of the death of a care leaver through the notification system.

Appendix A sets out an incident type, but this is not an exhaustive list. It should also be noted that if a child recovers, this does not mean that serious harm has not occurred.

Aim of document

The aim of this document is to promote:

- An awareness of statutory reporting requirements;
- An awareness of the procedure of reporting notifiable events to the National Panel;
- An improvement in service provision through the monitoring and reporting of such events.

Process for Notification to the National Panel

The notification to the National Panel needs to be made within 5 working days by the Strategic Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (SQAS) or The Principle Social Worker. This decision will be made in conjunction with the Director of Children social care or deputy, based on the information included in the Senior Leadership Alert Form provided by the service area.

Action	Timescale - within 5 working day framework
The person who becomes aware of the incident must inform their Line Manager	On Day One
The Line Manager will inform the relevant Service Manager	On Day One
The Service Manager will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- prepare a draft briefing- inform the relevant Strategic Manager and EDT of the incident- where the relevant Strategic Manager is unavailable, ensure an alternative Strategic Manager is identified to review and authorise the Senior Management Alert Form - seek and include legal advice.	On Day One

The Strategic Manager will then:

Review and agree the briefing and send to the relevant Assistant Director where needed	On Day One
Review whether there is a need to seek legal advice and / or communications team advice	On Day One
Will alert the NCT Chief Executive and Director of Children's Social Care, copying in the SQAS Strategic Manager, Operational Strategic Managers and all relevant ADs using the Senior Leadership Alert Form. A copy of the Senior Leadership Alert Form must be sent to the 'SLAFNotification' inbox.	On Day One

Director of Children’s Social Care will alert the DCSs and the Chair of the Trust. The DCSs and the NCT Chief Executive to alert other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.	On day one
Strategic Manager SQAS will consider if there is a need to refer the case to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership for a Rapid Review	By Day Five
Review and update the Senior Leadership Alert Form, and send it to the Strategic Manager SQAS who, in conjunction with other statutory partners (Police and ICB), will then make the a decision whether to notify the National Panel using the online notification process	By Day Five

The Strategic Manager

- will track the progression of the Notification and must be kept informed about any subsequent events that follow including any updating of the Senior Leadership Alert Form;
- SQAS will use the information collated to contribute to NCT’s learning cycle.

Children who are normally resident outside Northamptonshire boundaries (regardless of legal status)

Where MASH identify that the referred child is normally resident in another Local Authority, they will contact the relevant Local Authority and inform Northamptonshire’s Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP). This should be done regardless of whether the referred child is known to the originating Local Authority or not.

If a child whose death or serious injury is notified to the NSCP is normally resident outside Northamptonshire, the NSCP will provide notification of that death or injury to the appropriate Local Safeguarding Board in writing within 1 working day.

Where there may be child protection concerns for the referred child or any associated child that is normally resident outside Northamptonshire boundaries who dies or suffers serious injury within Northamptonshire boundaries, MASH will hold a strategy meeting in accordance with the East Midlands Regional Protocol.

[East Midlands Regional Protocol](#)

Media

In all situations, the anonymity of the child must be preserved. Before any involvement with the press, legal advice should be recorded and passed with the Senior Leadership Alert Form to the Assistant Director, Director of Children Social Care and Director for Children’s Services who should be consulted prior to media activity. Where a number of agencies are involved there should be consideration of any statement to be given by the NSCP Strategic Leads rather than by individual agencies.

NB: For residential homes, if the incident is not urgent or serious, the Regulated Manager will inform the Service Manager and Designated Officer (DO) within 24 hours. Non-urgent and non-serious incidents will be discussed at the next supervision between the Team Manager and Service Manager.

Incidents of this nature will be collated and reported back to the NSCP as part of the LADO Annual Report.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL PANEL NOTIFICATIONS AND THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT PROCEDURE GENERAL GUIDANCE TABLE

<u>INCIDENT TYPE</u>	<u>PROCEDURE</u> NOTIFICATION TO NATIONAL PANEL (Strategic Managers and Regulated Managers only) SENIOR LEADERSHIP ALERT
CHILD DEATH	
Death of a child (where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)	
Death of a child whilst NCT staff are present	(where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)
Death of a child whilst on Council/ NCT premises	(where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)
Death of a child who attends a school in Northamptonshire	(where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)
Death of a child who has involvement with NCT	(where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)
Death of a Looked After Child or child in a regulated setting	
Death of a care leaver for those aged up to their 25 th birthday, where the local authority is aware of their care leaver status	(regardless of abuse or neglect being present)
CHILD SERIOUS* INJURY/HARM	
Serious injury or serious harm to a child (where abuse or neglect is known or suspected)	
Serious injury or serious harm to a Looked After Child or a child in a regulated setting	
STAFF	
An allegation of abuse has been made against a member of staff working in a children's home	

Concerns about the conduct of staff (professional practice, conduct or in breach of NCT policy)	(where there is/has been a potential risk of harm to a child)
CHILD PROTECTION	
A child protection (S47) investigation that involves a child living in a children's home has started or concluded	
Concerns a child living in a children's home may be involved (or suspected of being involved) in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	
OTHER	
Any case where a Rapid Case Review is being considered	
Any incident in a children's home that is considered 'serious' (may or may not require police involvement)	

NB: Other criteria for the Senior Leadership Alert procedure exist (please see Section 2.3) but are not relevant to this document. Please refer to the full Senior Leadership Alert procedure for more details.

NB: Only the Strategic Manager SQAS and Principle Social Worker in conjunction with the Director of Children's Social Care or deputy, the Strategic Manager for Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes **and** Regulated Managers (for external Children's Homes) complete National Panel Notifications.

Only **Strategic Managers** can sign off Senior Leadership Alert Forms.

*** 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. It should also cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment 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.**