

1.5.7 Need to Know Process

SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

These guidelines apply to Swindon Borough Council staff in Children Families and Community Health. They set out what the Director of Social Work need to know about, when, and how to brief him/her.

They have been updated to include Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018 and to incorporate the transition from the LSCB to Swindon Safeguarding Partnership.

The Director of Social Work will brief as required the Director, Lead Member and Chief Executive as appropriate to ensure that:

- All necessary steps have been taken to safeguard children (or staff where the need to know involves a staff member);
- To provide appropriate resources, support or guidance;
- Ensure that potential for media interest is managed;
- Arrange any necessary external body/regulatory body notification (e.g. National Panel as per Working Together July 2018; Ofsted, CQC, DfE notifications or Swindon Safeguarding Partnership to consider Serious Case Review and Practice Review requirements under Working Together Guidance; SW England and health regulatory bodies.
- That any relevant partner “need to know” system has also been triggered

This is necessary to ensure that those with overall responsibility are aware from the outset of any issues which may affect or disrupt service activity, service profile, and service reputation and are able to strategically manage the implications from the outset.

This Policy brings together a number of guidance documents which underpin this reporting process:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 Chapter 5.

Ofsted Guidance – Notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

Child Protection Procedures: Child Death Process for Unexpected Deaths (CDOP)

Tri.x Policy for: Death or Serious Injury to a Child (Looked After or CIN);

Need to Know Process;

Reporting a Serious Incident 2016.

The Director of Social Work will be informed of all Need to Know incidents and unexpected child deaths from across the Children Families and Community Health Directorate. These will be reviewed along with the Service Manager for Safeguarding who is the Designated Reporting Manager. The Service Manager for Manager (Designated Director of Social Work who will jointly decide if the incident or death should be reported to the Chief Executive and Lead Member of the Council, the Chair of the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership, Ofsted and DfE. The decision will also be made whether the incident should be referred to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, into the Practice Review sub group, CDOP and whether a rapid review should take place so that consideration of whether it meets the threshold for a learning review.

Serious Safeguarding Incidents are those in which the Local Authority knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected and the child dies (including suspected suicide) or is seriously harmed in the local authority area and while normally resident in the local authority's area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England.

Serious harm (as per Working Together, July 2018) 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 health⁷⁵. 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.

The Service Manager for Safeguarding is a member of the Swindon Safeguarding Practice Review sub group and Child Death Overview Panel which provides continuity, consistency and governance on behalf of the Local Authority.

The process for reporting a serious incident to the National Panel via the Child Safeguarding Incident Notification System is in place. The Service Manager for Safeguarding will review any report before submission. This notification will take place within 5 working days. They will also be part of any rapid review which the partners decide appropriate.

This chapter was updated in October 2019.

1. What should the Director of Social Work be briefed about?

- Sudden, unexpected and or unexplained deaths;
- Serious untoward clinical incident;
- Missing children looked after or child subject to a child protection plan;
- Fire, flood, significant vandalism, burglary of an office base;
- Significant accidents, injuries, and all violent incidents involving staff/volunteers;
- Controversies (e.g. forthcoming court hearings and inquests concerning clients or staff, service problems, complaints and inter-departmental issues of a serious nature;
- Any other matter which carry serious, immediate and real risk of adverse publicity for the service.

If you are still unsure whether the Head of Service needs to be briefed about an incident or controversy, discuss the matter with your manager.

2. Out of Hours

If the incident occurs out of hours it will usually be appropriate for staff to follow normal emergency procedures and contact the relevant manager or member of the senior management team first thing the following morning.

With reference to children looked after who go missing, including those receiving respite care, staff should use their discretion to distinguish between “missing” and “absent without agreement/knowledge”. Only contact the Head of Service out of hours in exceptional circumstances when it is necessary for the Head of Service to make a decision or take immediate action. If the media are to be contacted to make a public appeal for information or similar, the Head of Service must be contacted to confirm this decision out of hours.

3. The Briefing Procedure

When an incident occurs staff should first follow the operational guidelines appropriate to the service or team involved.

1. The first point of contact for the staff member involved should be the relevant third tier officer/Service Manager, or another of the directorate Service Managers if the appropriate one is not available;
2. The Service Manager will then contact the Director of Social Work via email if there is no immediate urgency or via the phone if immediate notification is required. If the Director of Social Work is not available another member of the senior leadership team should be contacted.

If at any time there is likely to be delay due to unavailability of the tier of management, the staff member should simply move up to the next tier. It is better that the Director or senior leadership team is involved prematurely than delayed involvement occurring with adverse effect.

3. Outline the incident and give a contact name and number of the member of staff who can provide up-to-date information. If there is an available mobile telephone number - provide this too.
4. The staff involved on the front line should keep a full record of events including timing of incidents, actions, and details of those contacted and information given in the normal way. All such records should be saved or copied to the client file as soon as possible.
5. The Service Manager will need to provide the Director of Social Work with a written briefing (see Appendix One for structure of briefings on cases) as soon as possible (always within 24 working hours) and send a copy by e mail. Note - the Director of Social Work will review and share with the Designated Reporting Manager where appropriate and decide any wider circulation of information is required - e.g. Director of Childrens Services, elected Members, Press Office, Chief Executive.
6. If the incident meets the criteria for Notification to the National Panel the Designated Manager will do this within 5 working days of the notification via the Child Safeguarding

Incident Notification System, and they will also alert the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership at the same time.

7. If the incident meets the criteria for consideration of a Serious Case Review or a practice review the Designated Manager will also complete this notification.

E mails should be marked “official- sensitive”. And the title starts with the words ‘Need to Know’

4. Contact Details of Relevant Staff

Up-to-date contact details for Children’s Senior Management Teams, Service Managers and other relevant staff including the Press Officer are held by the Emergency Duty Team who will get a message to the person. Likewise the personal assistants to any of the Directorate senior management staff also hold up-to-date contact details.

5. The Need to Know System Checklist

The “Need to Know” System Checklist Situations where the Head of Social Work should be briefed	Additional notes
Deaths and serious injury:	
Death or serious injury of a child looked after by Swindon Borough Council	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of a child on a Child Protection Plan	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of any other client	Highest priority
Any death or serious injury on Swindon Council premises	Highest priority
Death or serious injury in unusual circumstances of any client receiving a service from Children’s Services.	Highest priority
Death or serious injury in unusual circumstances of any resident or user of independent sector services even if they are not Swindon’s clients – if the same service is also responsible for care provision to Swindon’s clients.	Highest priority
Death or serious injury of any member of Swindons Council staff or staff seconded or working as a consultant for us.	Highest priority
Missing clients:	
Children on a Child Protection Plan	Report to Director of Social Work within one working day of known to be missing
Children Looked After	Discuss with Service Manager to determine risk level & Report to Director of Social Work within one working day of being missing
Accidents, injuries, violent incidents:	
Any major accident to a client or member of staff, or violent incident involving a member of staff – as defined in the Swindons Incident Reporting procedure.	Highest priority
Fire, flood, burglary, vandalism:	

Serious problem in any Swindon children's services/shared premises	Property Services may also need to be notified
Serious problem in any premises providing care to Swindon clients including out of area placements	Service Manager to assess possible risk and notify as appropriate
Controversies:	
Case situations (including forthcoming court hearings and inquests) where there may be local or national publicity, controversial issues, or political implications	May be notified via press officer or Legal Services
Controversial service problems or complaints likely to be raised with the Director by clients, Members of Parliament, Councillors etc.	May be notified via press officer or legal Services
Staff, Foster Carers, Consultants working on our behalf etc:	
Missing – see also Lone Working policy	Highest priority
Allegations of gross misconduct	Highest priority – not necessary to notify Press liaison officers
Any formal investigation and/or arrest for offences that may impinge on their ability to carry out their job	Report as soon

Appendix 1 Case Briefing NTK Form

Appendix 1

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE – HIGH PRIORITY

'NEED TO KNOW'

Child/Young Person's Name:		DoB/Age:	
Current Address:		Legal Status:	

		i.e. S17,20,31	
Allocated SW or Early Help Worker & Team:			
Date of Incident:			
Summary of Incident:			
Key Events connected to and of relevance to incident (if any):			
Immediate Actions being undertaken:			
Outstanding/Planned further Actions:			
Key contact – Service Manager/Team or Locality Manager		Tel:	
<u>Checklist of other key Actions:</u>			
EDS Notification:	YES/NO	Other Partner Agency Notification:	YES/NO
To be passed to Director of CFCH	YES/NO	Director of Social Work Decision	

Ofsted SERIOUS INCIDENT NOTIFICATION to national Panel REQUIRED?	YES/NO	Director of Social Work Decision
Comments by Director of Social Work (if any)		