



**Serious Child Safeguarding Incident  
Procedure and Practice Guidance  
(formerly the Notifiable Incident Process)**

**March 2020**

## Version Control

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DSP1 & 1.1	Business Unit	July 2019	Rebranded under new Safeguarding arrangements to reflect Statutory Guidance.
DSP1.2	Business Unit	March 2020	Updated to reflect revised guidance incorporated into the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Procedure -following challenge from the Learning and Development sub-group to tighten up decision making.

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## 1. Introduction

Child Protection in England is a complex multi-agency system with many different organisations and individuals playing a part. Sometimes a child suffers a serious injury or death as a result of child abuse or neglect. Understanding not only what happened but also why things happened as they did can help to improve responses in the future. Understanding the impact that the actions of different organisations and agencies had on the child's life, and on the lives of his or her family, and whether or not different approaches or actions may have resulted in a different outcome, is essential to improve our collective knowledge.

This document provides the process and guidance for dealing with serious child safeguarding incidents and sets out the areas of responsibility.

## 2. Definition of a Serious Child Safeguarding Incident and 'serious harm'

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) (Chapter 4, paragraph 12) defines a serious child safeguarding incident as circumstances where it is known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected which meet the following criteria:

- 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' is defined by S 16 B (9) Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) as a potentially life-threatening injury and includes serious or long-term impairment of mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

'Serious harm' is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) as including (but not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It also covers impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list and when making decisions judgement 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.

## 3. Responsibilities of all organisations where a serious child safeguarding incident occurs

When a serious child safeguarding incident occurs, the first step for any organisation is to ensure it takes appropriate action to ensure the immediate safety of the child/ren or minimise the impact of any serious harm, refer to the [Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Child Protection Procedures](#) for further guidance.

In all circumstances staff should consult with the Safeguarding Lead/Senior Manager within its own organisation and follow internal processes to ensure that where a child has died or suffered serious harm, the organisation will make a referral to the Local Authority

It is the responsibility of others who have functions relating to children to inform Local Authority of any incident which they think reaches the criteria for a serious child safeguarding incident notification (as outlined in paragraph 2).

The notification form is included with this document at Appendix 1 and should be sent to the Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit [dsp@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:dsp@darlington.gov.uk) which will then be **immediately** forwarded to the Director of Children and Adult Services.

Where a child has died unexpectedly, the organisation should also follow the [Child Death Review Procedures](#).

#### **4. Responsibility of the Local Authority to notify the Statutory Safeguarding Partners**

The Local Authority is required to report a serious child safeguarding incident to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners **within five working days** of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. Within this timescale the Statutory Safeguarding Partners will determine whether the event reaches the criteria for a notification to Ofsted, Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and DfE.

If the Statutory Safeguarding Partners agree that the criteria have been reached for a notification the Local Authority will notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

It is expected that the Local Authority will feedback to the referrer the outcome of the notification within five working days of the decision being made. If the referrer is dissatisfied with this outcome the matter should be discussed with the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, additional guidance is available in the [Professional Challenge Procedure and Guidance](#).

#### **5. Duty to notify serious child safeguarding incidents to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel**

The Local Authority has a statutory duty under [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) (Chapter 4, paragraph 12) to refer all serious child safeguarding incidents to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. A serious child safeguarding incident refers to circumstances where it is known or suspected that a child has been abused or neglected which meet the following criteria:

- 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.

If the Statutory Safeguarding Partners agree that a case meets the criteria for a serious child safeguarding incident the Local Authority must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel **within five working days** of becoming aware that the event has occurred.

## 6. Duty to notify Ofsted and Secretary of State for Education (DfE)

Online notifications to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will also be shared with Ofsted (to inform its inspection and regulatory activity) and with DfE to enable it to carry out its functions.

The Local Authority must also notify the Secretary of State for Education (DfE) and Ofsted where a child looked after has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

## 7. Rapid Review Panel

A Rapid Review Panel should be convened within **15 working days** of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the notification from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to consider the information in line with any guidance.

The purpose of the Rapid Review Panel is to decide whether the serious child safeguarding incident reaches the threshold for a national or local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR).

Where possible the Rapid Review Panel meeting should be held between 7-10 days following the date of notification from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to allow sufficient time to report back to them within the required timescales.

The Rapid Review Panel will be chaired by a representative(s) of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners. Key agencies involved with the child and/or family will be asked to provide information/reports to support the Safeguarding Partners in their decision making as to whether the criteria for a review are met.

A recommendation on the level of review will then be reported to the leads of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners/Independent Scrutineer/Chair who will make the final decision on the level of review.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will be notified of the final decision within 15 working days of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the notification.

For detailed guidance on convening a Rapid Review Panel see [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) and the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Procedure and Practice Guidance](#)

### **Responsibility of the Statutory Safeguarding Partners - decisions on local and national Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews**

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners must make arrangements to:

- identify serious child safeguarding cases which raise issues of importance in relation to the area and
- commission and oversee the review of those cases, where they consider it appropriate for a review to be undertaken

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When a serious child safeguarding incident becomes known to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners, they must consider whether the case meets the criteria for a Child Safeguarding Practice Review and whether the review is a local or national review.

Meeting the criteria does not mean that Statutory Safeguarding Partners must automatically carry out a local Child Safeguarding Practice Review. It is for them to determine whether a review is appropriate, taking into account that the overall purpose of a review is to identify improvements to practice. Issues might appear to be the same in some child safeguarding cases but reasons for actions and behaviours may be different and so there may be different learning to be gained from similar cases.

Decisions on whether to undertake reviews should be transparent and the rationale communicated appropriately, including to families. If following consideration, it is identified that it is not appropriate to conduct a review and the incident does not relate to the unexpected death of a child, the Statutory Safeguarding Partners will close the referral as no further action.

Details of all serious child safeguarding incident notifications referred to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners (SSP) should be shared with the Chair of the Learning and Development sub-group in the interests of openness and transparency and to enable the sub-group to discuss and analyse the decisions made.

The Learning and Development sub-group will then consider the information provided to determine:

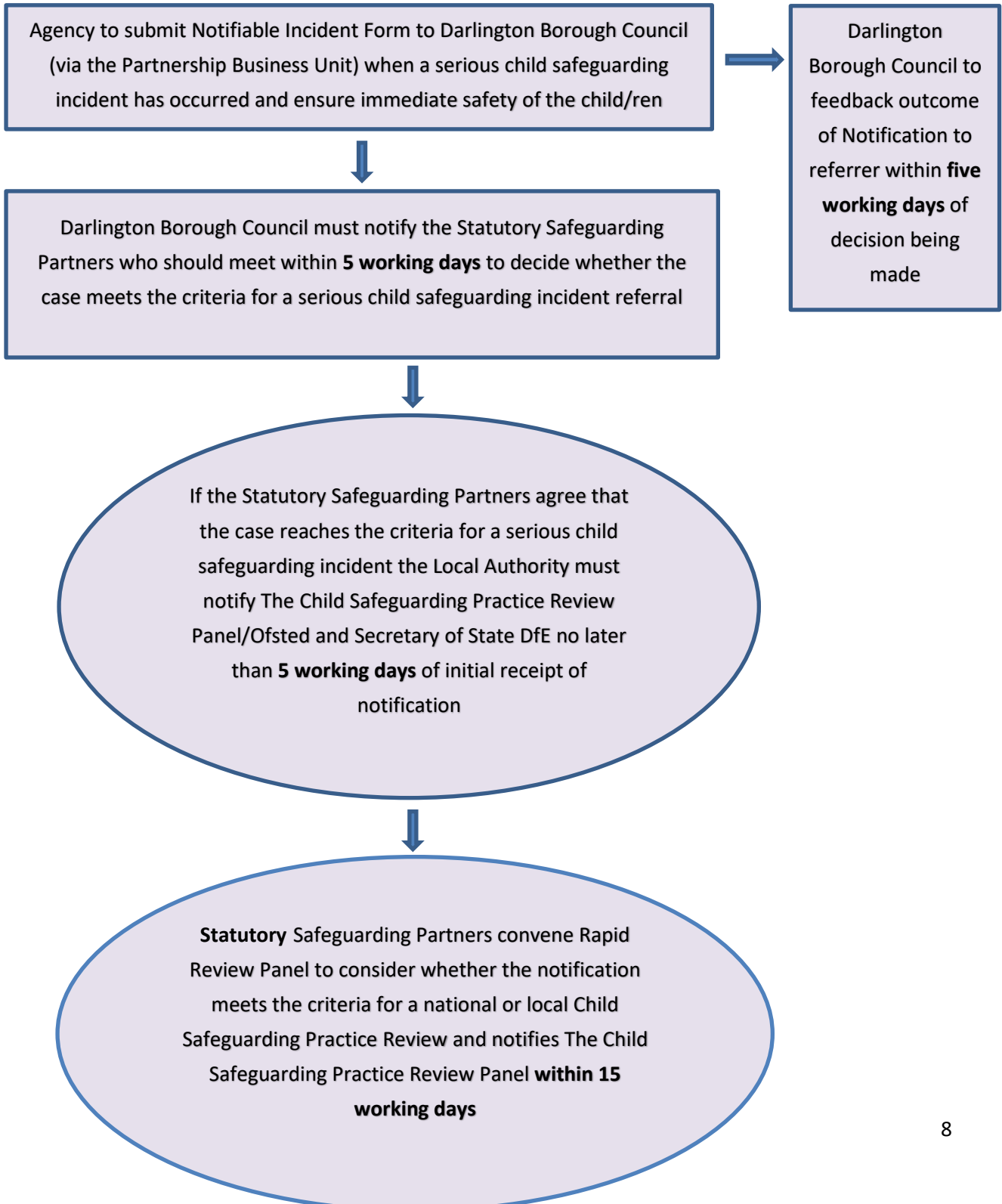
1. Whether a multi-agency practice review should be undertaken;
2. Whether a multi-agency audit should be undertaken on similar cases;
3. Whether there is learning for a single agency and an internal review is undertaken;
4. Whether an issue is highlighted that needs to be explored further, through quality assurance processes;
5. No further action required.

The Learning and Development sub-group will provide the rationale and outcome of their decision to the SSP for approval.

For detailed guidance on Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews see [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Procedure and Practice Guidance](#)



**Process for dealing with serious child safeguarding incidents when it is known that a child has been abused or neglected**







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**Notifiable Incident Form**

This Notifiable Incident form is to be used for circumstances and/or events which require urgent reporting to the Director of Children and Adult Services at Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and in addition DBC’s statutory responsibilities for notifying, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, Ofsted and the Secretary of State for Education of serious child safeguarding incidents.

**1. Reporting Details:**

<b>Date reported:</b>	
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<b>Who reported to:</b>	
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<b>CC:</b>	
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<b>From: (Name and Job Title)</b>	
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<b>Organisation :</b>	
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<b>Date of Incident:</b>	
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<b>Does incident relate to the death of a child?</b>	YES	NO
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<b>Date of Death:</b>	
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<b>Does alleged incident involve the conduct of a staff member?</b>	YES	NO
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<b>Send Completed Form securely to:</b>	Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit Town Hall Darlington DL1 5QT E-mail – <a href="mailto:dsp@darlington.gov.uk">dsp@darlington.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 01325 406450
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**2. Child details:**

<b>Child's last name:</b>	
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<b>Child's forename:</b>	
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<b>Child's middle names:</b>	
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<b>Other names used:</b>	
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<b>Date of birth:</b>	
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<b>Age at time of incident:</b>	
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<b>Gender:</b>	
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<b>Ethnicity:</b>	
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<b>Nationality:</b>	
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**3. Parents/Guardians:**

Parent's last name:	Parent's first name:	Date of birth:	Relationship to child:

**4. Siblings:**

Sibling's last name:	Sibling's first name:	Date of birth:	Relationship to child:	Gender:	Ethnicity:	Other Ethnicity:	Nationality: (if known)

**5. Case details:**

What is the main cause of incident? Choose an item.

What are the characteristics of the case?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual abuse               | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional abuse       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol abuse          | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent is in care          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recent neglect        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug abuse             | <input type="checkbox"/> More than one child abused | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-standing neglect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parental mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Child of teenage pregnancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fabricated illness     | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent is care leaver      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not yet known         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shaken baby syndrome   | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious illness            |  |

**6. Case outline:**

Please provide a short outline of the case and the serious incident including any action taken after the incident to safeguard the child/sibling.

**7. Child Protection**

Was the child on Child Protection Plan (CPP) at the time of the incident?

Yes  No

Was the child on Child Protection Plan (CPP) prior to the incident?

Yes  No

<b>Date CPP commenced:</b>	
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<b>Date CPP ended:</b>	
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**CP Category**

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Were any siblings on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) at the time of the incident?

Yes  No

Were any siblings on a Child Protection Plan (CPP) prior to the incident?

Yes  No

Name of sibling:	Date CPP commenced:	Date CPP ended:	Physical abuse	Sexual abuse	Emotional abuse	Neglect

### 8. Legal Status

What was the legal status of the child/young person at the time of the incident?

Choose an item.

### 9. Disability

Did the child have a disability prior to the incident occurring, which affected any of the following?

Yes  No

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour     | <input type="checkbox"/> Incontinence  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consciousness | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Function | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision        |

Please give details:

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### 10. Setting

Where was the child resident/placed at time of incident? Choose an item.

<b>Placement name (if applicable):</b>	
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<b>Placement address:</b>	
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<b>Placement sector (Local authority/Other):</b>	
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**11. Education/ Early Years Provision**

Did the child attend a college, school, child minder, nursery or other early years provision at the time of the incident?

Yes No  Possibly

<b>Name of establishment (if applicable):</b>	
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<b>Address:</b>	
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<b>Ofsted Unique Reference Number (if known):</b>	
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**12. Agency**

Was the child known to Social Care or other agencies prior to the incident?

Yes No

Please provide agency names:

Agency name:	Start Date:	End Date:

**13. Criminal Proceedings:**

Is the case linked to a complex abuse investigation?

Yes No

Alleged abuser(s) and relationship to the child

Name:	Relationship:

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Name of any person(s) charged and relationship to the child

Name:	Relationship:

Have Criminal Proceedings been instigated?

Yes No Possibly

**14. Manager Comment:**

**15. Recommendation:**

