



Forth Valley Inter-agency Protocol for conducting an Initial or Significant Case Review

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1. Introduction and acknowledgement

1.1 Following the publication in March 2015 of the Scottish Government's revised National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Conducting a Significant Case Review <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00474570.pdf> the three Ayrshire Child Protection Committees developed a protocol to provide additional local direction for multi-agency staff on conducting Initial and Significant Case Reviews (ICRs/SCRs). This served to:

- augment what was already provided in the national guidance and,
- assist a systematic and transparent approach to undertaking Initial and/or Significant Case Reviews

This protocol was made available to Child Protection Committees' across Scotland and forms the basis for the Forth Valley Protocol.

2. Context

2.1 A Significant Case Review is a multi-agency process for establishing the facts of, and learning lessons from, a situation where a child has died or has not died but has sustained significant harm or risk of significant harm. Significant Case Reviews should be seen in the context of a culture of continuous improvement and should focus on learning and reflection on day-to-day practices, and the systems within which those practices operate. All stages of the ICR/SCR process will be progressed by partners as swiftly as possible to prevent unnecessary anxiety and stress to those practitioners involved in such cases. Wherever possible, staff should be involved in reviews and should get feedback when the review is finished.

2.2 In addition to the ICR/SCR process, the CPC is committed to reflecting on good and effective practice. It regularly considers learning from work which has had a positive impact and professionals are encouraged to highlight positive practice which can be reviewed to enable learning and sharing.

3. Objectives

3.1 The overarching objectives of a Significant Case Review are to:

- Establish whether there are lessons to be learned about how better to protect children and young people, and help ensure they get the help they need when they need it in the future;
- Learn and improve services as well as recognise good practice;
- If and when appropriate, make recommendations for action (albeit that immediate action to improve service or professional shortcomings need not await the outcome of a formal review);
- Consider how any findings, recommended actions and learning will be implemented;
- Address the requirement to be accountable, both at the level of the agency/agencies and the occupational groups involved;
- Increase public confidence in public services, providing a level of assurance about how those services acted in relation to a significant case about a child; and
- Identify national implications (where appropriate) including good practice.

3.2 The national guidance supports the achievement of these objectives by helping those responsible for reviews to:

- Undertake them at a level which is necessary, reasonable and proportionate;
- Adopt a consistent, transparent and structured approach;
- Identify the skills, experience and knowledge that are needed for the review process and consider how these might be obtained;
- Address the needs of the many different people and agencies who may have a legitimate interest in the process and its outcome; and
- Take account of the evidence base.

3.3 The national guidance also sets out:

- The criteria for identifying whether a case is significant;
- The procedure for undertaking an initial case review (ICR);
- The process for conducting a significant case review including reporting mechanisms and dissemination of learning; and
- Tools to support the process of conducting an ICR and an SCR.

4. Criteria for establishing whether a case is significant

Firstly, a child is generally a person under the age of 18. (See National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014, (Part One) for more detail).

4.1 Where a notification for an initial case review for a young person aged 16-17 years, is made to the CPC, the Chair of the CPC should contact the Chair of the local Adult Protection Committee to discuss the notification and agree how the ICR notification will proceed.

4.2 Where a notification for an initial case review for a young person aged between 18 and 25 years who is eligible for receipt of aftercare or continuing care from the local authority is made to the Adult Protection Committee (APC), the Chair of the APC should contact the Chair of the local Child Protection Committee to discuss the notification and agree how the ICR will proceed.

4.3 A significant case need not be about just one significant incident. In some cases, for example, neglect, concerns may be cumulative.

4.4 Criteria

When a child dies and the incident or accumulation of incidents (a case) gives rise to significant/serious concerns about professional and/or service involvement or lack of involvement, and one or more of the following apply:

- *Abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the child's death;*
- *The child is on, or has been on, the Child Protection Register (CPR) or a sibling is or was on the CPR. This is regardless of whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the child's death unless it is absolutely clear to the Child Protection Committee that the child having been on the CPR has no bearing on the case;*
- *The death is by suicide or accidental death;*

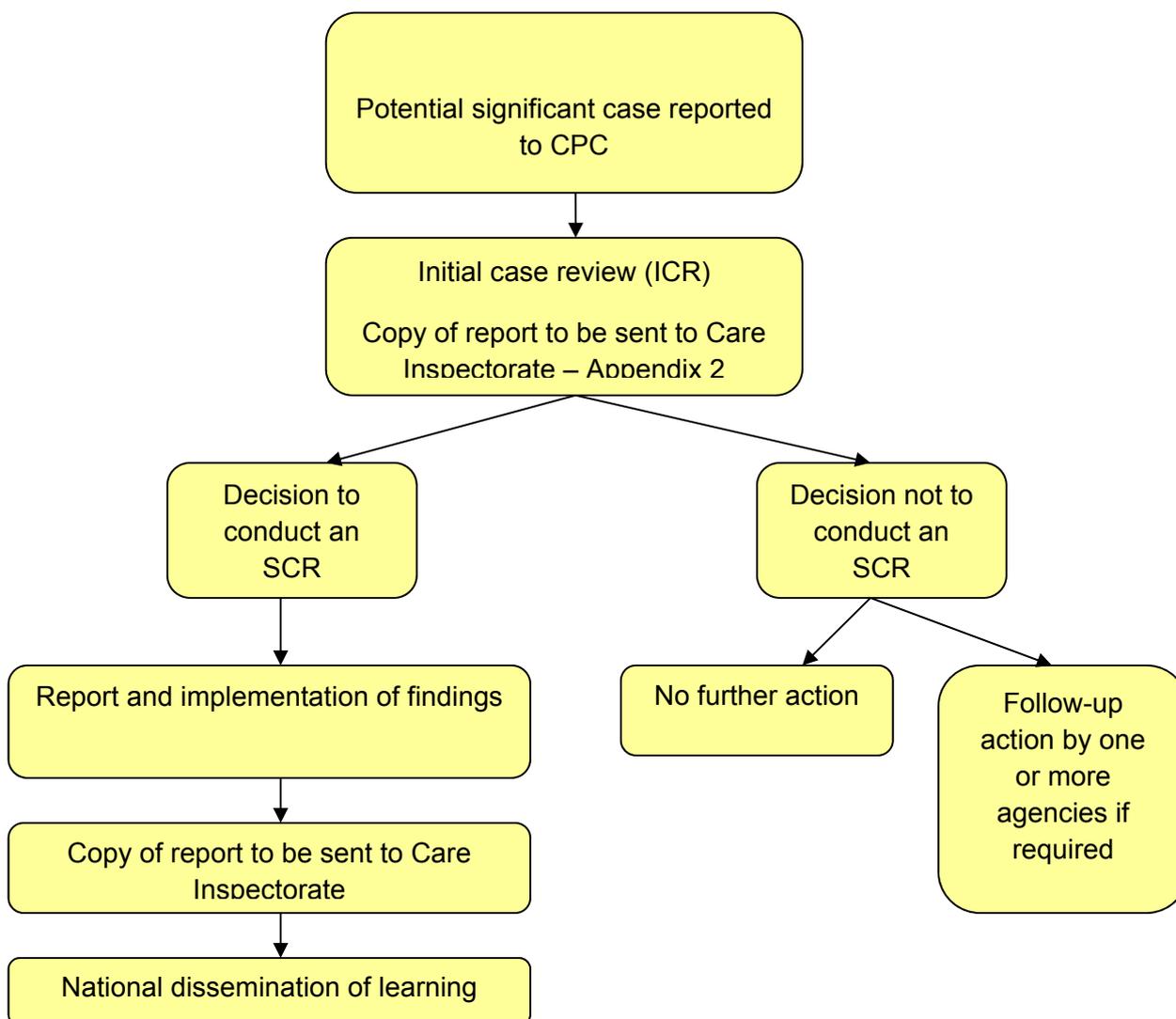
- *The death is by alleged murder, culpable homicide, reckless conduct, or act of violence;*
- *At the time of their death the child was looked after by, or was receiving aftercare or continuing care from, the local authority,*

4.5 **When a child has not died but** has sustained **significant** harm or risk of significant harm as defined in the National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland, **and** in addition to this, the incident or accumulation of incidents (a case) gives rise to serious concerns about professional and/or service involvement or lack of involvement, and the relevant Child Protection Committee determines that there may be learning to be gained through conducting a Significant Case Review.

(National Guidance for Child Protection Committees - Conducting a Significant Case Review, 2015)

5. The purpose of an Initial Case Review (ICR)

5.1 The stage before moving to a Significant Case Review involves the Initial Case Review process which is carried out to enable a decision to be made about whether there is a need to hold a Significant Case Review. This ICR process allows any agency to refer a potential “significant case” to their local Child Protection Committee (CPC), where a professional considers the criteria for an SCR has been met. The ICR process is designed to capture all relevant information across agencies/services involved with the child, with a view to allowing to The CPC or a mandated Panel thereof to make an informed decision on whether to progress to an SCR or not. The flow chart below provides a basic outline of the ICR/SCR process.



6. Potential significant case reported

- 6.1 Any agency can ask for a case to be considered for review by a Child Protection Committee (CPC). Concerns raised by families should be addressed through relevant agencies' normal complaints procedures, and will not be considered for an ICR/SCR within this protocol. When considering whether to ask for a case to be reviewed, agencies should consider if the circumstances of the case appear to meet the nationally agreed criteria, set out above. The professional seeking a review should, consult with their respective Manager/Head of Service and with their agreement, **complete the Initial Case Review Notification Form (Appendix 1) and send it electronically by e-mail to the CPC Chair via the Lead Officer as soon as possible and in any case within 7 working days from the date of the incident leading to the concern or the date when cumulative concerns are recognised as being potentially significant.**
- 6.2 Contact should be made with the CPC Lead Officer to provide an alert of the impending submission of an ICR notification.

6.3 The ICR Notification form should include the following information:

- A statement about the current position of the child, their details and, if they are alive, what actions have been or will be taken on their behalf;
- A brief description of the case and the basis for referral;
- Any other formal proceedings underway;
- A summary of agency/professional involvement; and
- Lead contacts for each agency and those involved with the child.

6.4 Due to the need to proceed swiftly, this form must be submitted within the timescales specified above, **even if all the information is not available**.

7. Receipt of ICR notification

7.1 On receipt of the Initial Case Review Notification Form (**Appendix 1**) the Lead Officer will liaise with the Chair of the CPC (**Note:** Reference to the Chair in this Protocol also means in their absence, the Vice-Chair of the CPC). The Chair will then confirm the membership of the CPC's ICR/SCR Panel and the Lead Officer will circulate the **Initial Case Review Agency Report template (Appendix 2)** to Heads of Service (or equivalent) for all partner agencies or services involved with the child, for completion. Once completed, the form and associated chronology **must be returned electronically by email to the Lead Officer as soon as possible and in any case no longer than 14 calendar days from the date the Initial Case Review Agency report was requested**. A secure email connection should be used to transfer this information.

7.2 **Note:** In exceptional circumstances the foregoing timescales in relation to the submission of the Initial Case Review Notification and Initial Case Review Agency Report may be re-visited if agencies have a legitimate reason as to why they cannot comply but in all such cases the Lead Officer of the Child Protection Committee must be made aware as soon as possible.

7.3 On receipt of a notification requesting a case review the CPC Chair is to provide an update to the Chief Officer's Group.

8. ICR agency report

8.1 Agency staff gathering information to complete their Initial Case Review Agency report should include the following:

- Agency specific details known about the child and family;
- Any other significant adults or children involved;
- A summary of involvement including background;
- An outline of known key issues;

- Any identified elements of emerging practice;
- Any identified areas for improvement;
- A brief chronology of involvement with the child or young person and family
- Any particular sensitivities including linked investigation or processes

8.2 It is important that the Chair of the CPC establishes from the outset whether or not there are linked investigations or processes, maintains a close dialogue with those responsible for the linked investigations/processes and takes these linked investigations/processes into consideration at every stage of the ICR/SCR process.

Such Processes may include:

- Criminal proceedings
- Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI)
- Report on the Death of a Looked After Child
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) proceedings
- Sudden unexplained Death in Infancy (SUDI) review
- Disciplinary Proceedings
- Investigation of a Significant Clinical Incident

8.3 The purpose of this is to:

- avoid witness contamination or otherwise interfere with evidence gathering;
- avoid duplicate information being collected;
- establish agreement in relation to the processes and timescales that can be applied to actions required under this guidance;
- be sensitive to the involvement of key personnel in a range of processes, and the potential implications for the SCR;
- secure cooperation from all agencies in relation to the release and sharing of information;
- decide whether a parallel process should mean that an ICR/SCR should be adjourned or not.

8.4 Criminal investigations always have primacy and some of the other processes such as those noted above, have a statutory basis. In such circumstances contact must be made by the CPC Chair/Lead Officer with the relevant Procurator Fiscal to seek clarity as to whether a parallel SCR process will be permitted or not. In certain cases it may be prudent to postpone an ICR/SCR. This is a decision for the Chair of the CPC following consultation with COPFS.

8.5 Those referring significant cases for consideration for review should **not delay** in referring because of an on-going investigation. It is critical that when an agency becomes aware a CPC is considering, or undertaking, any level of review of a case under this guidance, that the

agency notifies the Chair of the CPC of any type of investigation or review being conducted by their agency or any other.

- 8.6** Once an ICR/SCR is underway, if any agency requires to take remedial or disciplinary action in relation to the case, this must be done by prior consultation with the ICR/SCR Panel Chair. In addition, the CPC Lead Officer must be kept informed of significant changes to the family's circumstances, given regular updates on the wellbeing of the child and advised of progress with respect to any criminal proceedings.

9.0 Consideration of ICR information

- 9.1** CPC will have in place an ICR/SCR Panel, with representation at senior level of the statutory agencies, which will operate on behalf of the CPC where a notification of a potentially significant case for review is received. Other services/agencies may be involved as required. The Panel will be chaired by the Chair (or Vice Chair) of the CPC and will be responsible for determining the approach to be taken to an ICR/SCR, including the need to appoint an independent review officer and for seeking ratification of their decisions from the Chief Officers Group (COG). The Panel will also be responsible for notifying the CPC of arrangements being made to undertake an ICR/SCR, and for reporting findings/recommendations to the CPC and Chief officers Group.

10. CPC panel meeting to consider ICR information

- 10.1** **Within 28 days from the date of the ICR Notification being received,** the ICR Panel of the CPC will convene, at a date, time and location set by the CPC Chair, to consider the multi-agency information provided (collated by the Lead Officer), including each agency's/services' report, collated chronology and timeline with a view to:

- Establishing if further information is required to enable a recommendation – set timescale for completion and supplementary meeting; or
- Agreeing there is sufficient information available to enable a recommendation to progress to an SCR or not (recording rationale).

- 10.2** In coming to a decision at the meeting, the ICR Panel should consider the following:

- An SCR should only be undertaken when the criteria are met; where there is potential for significant multi-agency learning; and where an SCR is in the public interest and in the best interests of children and young people and their family. Consideration will also be given to whether the review should be internal or external. If internal, appointment of a Lead Reviewer and members of the Review Team will be required. If external, it will be necessary to appoint a Lead Reviewer(s), set terms of reference and in either case, set timescales for any interim progress reports/meetings and delivery date of the final report. In addition, the Panel will assess the need for any actions which may be necessary in the interim. If there is no clear consensus within the CPC Panel as to whether or not to progress to an SCR, the final decision rests with the Chair of the ICR Panel.
- The ICR Panel may decide that no SCR is needed but follow-up action by one or more agencies is required. This may be the case if, for example, there has been a misunderstanding of guidance, or if local protocols need to be reinforced. The ICR Panel may want to draw appropriate guidance to staff's attention or review training or

protocols on a particular theme. They may also decide to initiate local action to rectify an immediate issue or to undertake single agency action. Follow-up action should be agreed and scheduled into the CPC's future work programme.

- Where the ICR Panel is satisfied there are no concerns and there is no scope for significant multi-agency learning or it is clear that appropriate action has already been taken they may decide to take no further action.

11. Ratification of decision

11.1 Once the ICR Panel has decided the outcome of the ICR, the Child Protection Committee will be notified of the decision and a note will be made at Part B of the ICR Report of any discussions and decisions made, along with the reasons. The outcome will then be communicated to the Chief Officers' Group for ratification of the decisions made. Again, a note of any comments/discussions made by Chief Officers will be recorded along with any decisions made, on the ICR Report. The report should include the areas outlined in National Guidance Exemplar Report (**Appendix 3**).

12. When a Significant Case Review (SCR) is necessary

Step 1- Consideration of how the SCR will be undertaken, whether it is to be an internal or external review.

12.1 The SCR panel will consider if it is necessary to commission an external review, factors which may influence this decision are;

- There are likely to be national as well as local recommendations
- Local recommendations are likely to be multi-agency rather than for a single agency;
- The case is already high profile, or is potentially likely to attract significant media attention;
- Councillors/ MSPs / MPs have voiced their concerns about services locally;
- The CPC is undertaking multiple reviews, which is impacting on the availability of local resources;
- The child or young person's family/carers may have already have expressed concerns about the actions of the agencies.

12.2 Where an external organisation or individual is commissioned to undertake/lead an SCR it shall continue to be owned by the CPC.

12.3 Following the decision to conduct an internal SCR

Step 2- Identification of the Review Team

12.4 The SCR panel will identify the SCR team and the best person to be the Lead Reviewer (internal or external). This will be a multiagency team from the key agencies and where possible will not involve anyone who was substantially involved in the situation directly.

12.5 The review team members should have the skills to:

- Gather relevant evidence from a wide variety of sources and be prepared to negotiate if information is not forthcoming;
- Have skills of investigation;
- Test the validity of the evidence and sift the evidence;
- Interpret information from a wide variety of sources;
- Make sound judgements on information collected;
- Analyse the root cause of/factors that contributed to the significant case;
- Liaise with other bodies and establish a good working relationship;
- Demonstrate sensitivity to national and local level issues; and
- Appreciate the need for clarity about the difference of remit and task of an SCR as opposed to other on-going proceedings relating to that case such as a criminal investigation.

12.6 Each agency that has an employee, or employees, on the review team shall ensure that the person has enough time to carry out the SCR tasks assigned to them. Each agency is responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are informed of the SCR review team having authority to undertake whatever tasks are necessary to fulfil the remit set by the SCR Panel and to meet the objectives of an SCR. Any difficulty in relation to these matters shall be reported to the SCR Panel by the SCR Lead Reviewer.

Step 3 Developing the Remit

12.7 The SCR must have a clear and specified remit to ensure clarity of purpose and assist those contributing to the review. The remit will be drafted and agreed by the SCR Panel and the SCR Lead Reviewer(s). The remit will clearly set out

- Aim of the SCR
- Circumstances
- Anticipated outcomes
- Objectives
- Methodology
 - Review process
 - Independence (Within the review team or external ‘critical friend’/ reflective support)
 - Family involvement (identifying who will be the key family link, approach to be taken to engaging and involving the family)
 - Staff involvement (presumption that key staff will be engaged in the review)
- Timescales
- Commissioning and reporting
- Dissemination of learning
- Publication
- Media interest

Step 4 Setting the work plan

- 12.8** Within 5 working days of the first meeting of the SCR Panel, the CPC Lead Officer shall convene a meeting of the Review Team. The purpose of this is to establish a detailed plan on how the SCR tool/methodology, approved by the SCR Panel, will be used to conduct the Review.
- 12.9** Should delays in the process begin to emerge, the SCR Lead Reviewer must immediately report these to the CPC chair.

13. KEY FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN CONDUCTING THE REVIEW

- The remit and time period of the review and timescales for receipt of the interim and the final report;
- The extent to which the Lead Reviewer has access to the SCR Panel for on-going discussion;
- Interim reporting arrangements - how often, in what format and to whom should interim updates be sent and received;
- Who on the SCR Panel has delegated responsibility to be the point of contact should the findings of the SCR be used as evidence in civil proceedings that might arise out of a case;
- Agreed approach to deal with media enquiries
- Who will make the links with relevant interests outside the main statutory agencies;
- Who the key contacts are for the review team across all the involved agencies. These key contacts will advise on, and broker access to, relevant practitioners and information, provide any agency information that may be relevant (protocols/guidance) and generally act as a liaison point;
- Whether there are likely to be issues of access to case records and how that will be addressed;
- Whether the review team need to conduct interviews or whether it is sufficient for them to look at the files to establish the facts of the case;
- Which agencies and professionals should contribute to the review, and who else should be asked to submit a report or otherwise contribute. This will be based on the chronology of who has been involved with the child and family/carers;
- What briefing will be provided for contributors, and by whom. A briefing will normally be an oral discussion about the purpose of the Review. SCR panels will need to consider whether contributors should receive information about the areas to be covered in advance of the interview and whether the files should be available to them for reference;
- What arrangements are in place for feedback to the contributors, including the child and their family/carers, and what mechanism will be used to enable contributors to check the accuracy of what is recorded as it is drafted up for the interim and/or final reports.
- Establishing a link with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to discuss the speed and progress of the SCR in relation to parallel proceedings.

The work undertaken by SCR team members is on behalf of CPC. The reports and findings of the review should not be shared without the agreement of the chair of CPC.

If the SCR review team uncovers evidence of criminal acts of civil negligence unrelated to the case under review, the SCR Lead Reviewer will bring this to the immediate attention of the chair of the CPC.

14. Involvement of the family

14.1 In the case of a decision to proceed to an SCR, it is the responsibility of the SCR panel to consider the best method for advising the child and family of their intention to conduct a SCR and ensure that the child and/or family/carers are informed of CPC's intentions. The terms of reference will set out any specific details/expectations of the SCR team in relation to involvement of family members. The SCR team will consider

- who will be the liaison point for the child or young person (if alive), and/or for their family/carers;
- how the family members will be invited to contribute to the review;
- the need to ensure that there is a clarity of purpose. It is essential that the appointed liaison ensures that the family members have a clear understanding of the review process and an agreed understanding of the purpose of their involvement is reached;
- the level of family involvement (this should be discussed and negotiated with the family);
- who the SCR team consider to be the family members; and
- arrangements for monitoring the on-going care and protection of the child or young person with key/significant changes in the family's circumstances being share appropriately.

Where there are on-going criminal proceedings connected with the case, consultation with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) will be required in advance of any notification being made to the child or young person and family/carers of the decision to proceed to a SCR.,

15. Consideration of a 'Critical Friend'

15.1 The Lead Reviewer(s) in consultation with the CPC Chair will consider if it would be beneficial to appoint a 'critical friend'. This could be to assist in a particular area, for example, a complex medical process/analysis of assessment. Or the SCR Lead Reviewer(s) could consider the views of a 'critical friend' in reviewing the draft report to enable an independent perspective on the work of the review and its findings.

16. Preparing the report

16.1 The Lead Reviewer is/are responsible for drafting the **Significant Case Review Report** (see **Appendix 4** for template) to be presented to the SCR panel. This shall be compiled from the records made by the members of the SCR team. The content, including the findings and any recommendations, should be agreed by all members of the SCR team. Should there be disagreement, this shall be noted in the report. Ultimate responsibility for the content of the report going to the SCR panel rests with the SCR Lead Reviewer.

17. Structure of the report

17.1 It is important that there is a degree of consistency in the structure and content of SCR reports - although this will depend on the methodology used - to make it easier for people to identify and use the findings, and for read-across to other reports to be made. The report should, therefore, include the areas outlined in National Guidance Exemplar SCR Report (**Appendix 4**).

17.2 The report compiled by the SCR team should contain the following:

An introduction – summarise the circumstances that led to the review, state the remit and a list of contributors to the review suitably anonymised;

Separate executive summary and list of recommendations (and who the recommendations are for);

- A chronology of agency/professional involvement;
- The extent of family/carers' involvement;
- Good practice that has been identified by the review;
- Areas for practice development identified by the review;
- Analysis; and
- Findings/recommendations.

Core data should be recorded in an appendix to the report

17.3 Appendix 4 sets out an exemplar from the National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Conducting a Significant Case Review (March 2015). This should be viewed as guidance, outlining the key areas to be covered but can be amended to take account of local requirements.

18. Findings/Recommendations

18.1 Findings or recommendations for actions identified within a significant case review have to be clearly linked to the analysis and the learning identified from the review. The findings/recommendations should address the 'whys' identified as part of the review. Equally, the events within a significant case review need to be considered within the wider context of service delivery and practice. Therefore if an issue is identified with the quality of assessment, consideration needs to be given as to whether this is part of a wider issue around assessment skills and training or whether this was a single incident that perhaps has more implications for management and supervision.

18.2 The findings/ recommendations should be few in number, focused, specific and capable of being implemented. It would also be helpful to identify who these are aimed at and any resource implications. CPCs recognise that the best learning from significant case reviews may come from the process of carrying out the review.

19. External SCR – Specific considerations

19.1 When commissioning a Lead Reviewer and / or Review Team the CPC must pay particular attention to the following: -

- Confirm the remit is clear and deliverable;
- Establish clear reporting lines and agree handling of the review itself and the report;
- Identify milestones and agree the various elements of the process;
- Consider whether indemnity cover is required;
- Provide appropriate administrative support;
- Agree the method for obtaining additional resources if it becomes clear that these are necessary;
- Confirm if issues arise that need urgent action, the Chair of the CPC (and agencies) will be advised;
- Consider requirement for external reviewers to be disclosure checked;
- Establish a named contact person within the SCR Panel;
- Ensure the contract allows the CPC to reserve the right to proof-read the final draft to comment and amend factual errors;
- Clarify arrangements between the CPC, as the commissioner and owner of the SCR report, and the review team for communicating with the media regarding the review, and at what stage(s) of the SCR process.

20. Final steps

20.1 Following the completion of the review and the submission of the report to the SCR panel, there are a number of issues which each CPC must consider, these include:

• Action/ Improvement Plan

On behalf of the CPC, it is the responsibility of the SCR panel, to devise the action/improvement plan. The action plan should be developed under the direction of the Chair of the CPC and agreed by the full membership of the CPC in response to the SCR and its recommendations. The Action plan should reflect the required activity to achieve the recommendations and be owned by all the relevant agencies. Mechanisms to review the outcomes and impacts of such actions should be agreed and formally built into the CPC action plan. The plan then needs to be endorsed by the Chief Officers Group.

• The role of the Chief Officers

The CPC works on behalf of its respective Chief Officers Group, which comprises of the Chief Executive of the Local Authority area, the Divisional Commander of Police Scotland and the Chief Executive of NHS Forth Valley. In exercising their functions as Chief Officers, as defined in *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland*, it is the Chief Officers who will 'sign-off' the report.

The report shall be presented to the Chief Officers by the Chair of the CPC on behalf of the SCR Panel.

Having considered the report, the Chief Officers Group shall issue any direction or instruction pertaining to the report that they believe necessary and, in particular, indicate:

- their views on how actions to address areas for improvement are incorporated and implemented within and across relevant agencies and their staff,
- having taken account of the proposals presented by the SCR panel, their wishes, in relation to dissemination of the report.

• **Dissemination**

The circumstances of every case are different and the communication strategy for dissemination of the report and/or its findings and recommendations will differ. For each individual SCR, the CPC – in conjunction with the Chief Officers – should have a dissemination strategy that best serves the public interest and the purpose of improving service delivery. Further detail on dissemination and publication of the report or an executive summary thereof can be found in the National Guidance on Conducting an SCR 2015.

21. Administration

21.1 The CPC should maintain a register of all cases referred to it which are potentially significant cases. This allows for evidencing the decisions made; monitoring the progress of the reviews; monitoring and reviewing the implementation of recommendations/findings; and identifying contextual trends (such as prevalence of substance misuse or domestic abuse).

21.2 A written record of the decision(s) contained in **Part B of ICR Report (Appendix 3)** should be sent to all agencies directly involved with the child or young person and recorded in their case file

22. Care Inspectorate notification

22.1 A notification should be sent to the Care Inspectorate, using Part B of the ICR Report (**Appendix 3**) and, if appropriate, for parallel processes to other relevant parties (for example, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service). The primary role for the Care Inspectorate is to support continual improvement in the quality of services for children and young people, including child protection services. The Care Inspectorate aims to further improvement by:-

- (a) seeking information about all Initial Case Reviews (ICRs) carried out by CPCs to understand the rationale for proceeding or not proceeding to an SCR
- (b) acting as a central collation point for all SCRs completed across Scotland at the point at which they are concluded
- (c) reviewing the effectiveness of the processes for conducting each SCR and reporting informally to individual Chief Officers Groups and CPCs on good practice and areas of improvement
- (d) conducting a biennial review of all SCRs completed in Scotland, and, reporting nationally on the key learning points for the benefit of relevant services across Scotland and the Scottish Government

23. Confidentiality and Data Protection

23.1 Cases being considered for review under this guidance are subject to strict

confidentiality guidelines. Government Protective Marking should be used along with appropriate use of secure storage arrangements, transmission mediums and email facilities when communicating sensitive personal data about a child or their family. During the process of a review, it is important that all investigation is kept confidential until the conclusion of the process and an agreement is reached by the ICR/SCR Panel about what information should be shared with others and in what way. The primary purpose of case reviews is to identify learning and this can only be achieved when those involved are able to reflect on practice within a culture of openness, trust and support. This culture supports the concept of responsible accountability.

24. Supports for the Team Around The Child

- 24.1** The need for an early response to events and providing an opportunity for practitioners to come together and be advised of action being taken should be accommodated where possible. Early and effective communication regarding the progress of the review is crucial and appropriate steps should be put in place to advise practitioners, who have supported the child, that an ICR/SCR will be undertaken along with relevant updates, as the review progresses. Provision of information from direct line managers can be the most meaningful support for staff and should be actively encouraged. Managers will require to be responsive to the needs and requests made by their staff, which will help to manage/reduce levels of distress.
- 24.2** The ICR/SCR Panel will be responsible for ensuring that each agency has in place appropriate support mechanisms for staff members who have been involved in or affected by the significant case. Where appropriate a multi-agency approach to this support will be considered.
- 24.3** The work plan of the ICR/SCR will set out how practitioners will be involved in the process and what feedback mechanisms will be put in place to advise them of the progress of the review at key stages.

25. Media Strategy

- 25.1** Significant Case Reviews frequently attract the attention of the media and CPC Chairs in conjunction with the Chief Officers Group (COG), will wish to develop a proactive media strategy, and agree a single point of contact to ensure clarity of communication in respect to all media enquiries.
- 25.2** If it is agreed that the media should be informed, the Communications Team will prepare a media plan for consideration by the Chair of the Review Panel and the members of COG. Details of this media plan – including key messages, communications channels and timings – will be approved by the Chair of the COG.

The Chair of COG is not available, the Vice Chair will assume these responsibilities. If neither is available within the required timescale, the Communications Team will discuss this with the Chair of the Review Panel and seek their approval.

The Communications Team will ensure that any press enquiries in relation to SCRs are brought to the attention of the relevant Communications Teams in partner agencies.

Appendix 1

INITIAL CASE REVIEW NOTIFICATION FORM

The person first concerned that the criteria for an SCR has been met should seek the approval of their Manager / Head of Service, and if the criteria are believed to have been met send this form electronically by e-mail to the relevant Child Protection Committee Chair and Lead Officer **as soon as possible and in any case within 7 working days from the date of the incident leading to the concern or the date when cumulative concerns are recognised as being potentially significant.**

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) Chair shall make arrangements to contact all other agencies known to be involved who should, in turn, use the Initial Case Review Agency Report template to submit their own reports to the CPC Lead Officer within the agreed timescale.

DETAILS OF PERSON MAKING THE NOTIFICATION

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of person completing this form: | |
| Agency: | |
| Contact telephone number | |
| Date form submitted to CPC Chair | |

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON DETAILS

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Gender | |
| Address | |
| Agency identifier (CHI. etc.) | |
| Current legal status | |
| Educational establishment (if applicable) | |
| GP name and address | |
| Has this child ever been on a child protection register? Give details. | |
| | |
| Has a sibling of this child ever been on a child protection register? Give details. | |
| | |

PARENT/CARERS DETAILS

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |

OTHERS LIVING IN SAME HOUSEHOLD AS CHILD

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Provide details of any other significant children or adults. This should also include details of any child or adult who is relevant to the circumstances surrounding this referral.

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |

SERVICES INVOLVED

| | Name of service | Name of staff member | Designation | Email | Telephone |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |

Ground(s) on which the criteria for an SCR may have been met (you **must** make reference to Section 2, Forth Valley Protocol for Conducting an Initial/Significant Case Review)

Has any type of internal/single agency review of this case been initiated within your agency? (please tick)

Yes No Don't Know

Summarise the case background, highlighting key facts and agency/professional involvement. Include details of the current circumstances of the child and, if they are alive, what actions have been or will be taken on their behalf.

Please give details of any statutory proceedings you know are underway in relation to the circumstances; e.g. criminal investigation; referral to Reporter

Please return the completed form electronically by e-mail to: the Chair via the Lead Officer of your local Child Protection Committee (CPC).

[Falkirk Child Protection Committee](#)

[Evelyn Kennedy, Lead Officer Child Protection](#)

evelyn.kennedy@falkirk.gov.uk

[Clackmannanshire and Stirling Child Protection Committees](#)

[Anne Salter, Lead Officer Child Protection](#)

saltera@stirling.gcsx.gov.uk

asalter@clacks.gcsx.gov.uk

Appendix 2

INITIAL CASE REVIEW AGENCY REPORT

This form has been distributed to you because **[Insert Agency]** on **[Insert date]** has requested the Child Protection Committee (CPC) consider an Initial Case Review on the child or young person named below.

When asked to do so, agencies/services should complete this Initial Case Review Agency Report and send it by e-mail to the Child Protection Committee Lead Officer **as soon as possible and in any case within 14 working days from the date the Initial Case Review Agency Report was requested.**

This report should contain information relevant to the agency/service's contact/interaction with the child or young person. Each agency/service will submit details of their own involvement with the child or young person.

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) Lead Officer will have completed parts of this template before issuing the report request, based on information contained in the notification form. **If you notice any gaps or inaccurate information, please ensure you highlight this in your own submission.**

All initial case review agency reports received by the CPC Lead Officer will be acknowledged.

Date request for information sent: **[Insert Date]**

Date report to be completed and returned by: **[Insert Date]**

To be returned to: **[Insert Name and secure email address]**, Child Protection Lead Officer, **[Insert which CPC]**

A brief description of the reasons why this case has been referred for consideration for a Significant Case Review:

(To be completed by the Lead Officer)

Details of any formal proceedings underway:

(To be completed by the Lead Officer)

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON DETAILS

(This will be completed by the Lead Officer prior to issuing. Please check details against the information held by your agency/service and highlight any discrepancies and add any missing information)

| | |
|---|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Gender | |
| Address | |
| Agency identifier (CHI. etc) | |
| Current legal status | |
| Education establishment (if applicable) | |
| GP name and address | |
| Child protection registration history of child and any siblings | |
| Statement about current circumstances of child including nature of injury/cause of death | |

PARENT/CARERS DETAILS

(This will be completed by the Lead Officer prior to issuing. Please check details against the information held by your agency/service and highlight any discrepancies and add any missing information)

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Does this person have parental rights/responsibilities in respect of THIS child? YES/NO | |
| | |

OTHERS LIVING IN SAME HOUSEHOLD AS CHILD

(This will be completed by the Lead Officer prior to issuing. Please check details against the information held by your agency/service and highlight any discrepancies and add any missing information)

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Relationship to child | |
| Any relevant comments | |
| | |

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

(This will be completed by the Lead Officer prior to issuing. Please check details against the information held by your agency/service and highlight any discrepancies and add any missing information)

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |
| Name | |
| Date of birth | |
| Address (if different from child) | |
| Relationship to child | |
| | |

Please provide details of any core data you have in respect of this case.

(Summarise your agency/service's knowledge of this family and complete sections where applicable. Where you have no knowledge of a factor or where a factor is not applicable, leave blank)

| Core data for child or young person | |
|--|--|
| Sexual orientation | |
| Disability | |
| Health needs (including mental health and/or learning difficulties) | |
| Living circumstances prior to incident | |
| Position in family/number of siblings | |
| Ethnicity | |
| Religion | |
| Looked after status & history | |

| Core data for parent/carer | |
|--|--|
| Disability | |
| Health needs (including mental health and/or learning difficulties) | |
| Drug/alcohol/substance use | |
| Convictions | |
| Relevant information about childhood | |
| Domestic Abuse | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Anti-social behaviour | |
| Ethnicity | |
| Religion | |
| Marital/relationship status e.g. co-habitation | |
| Living circumstances | |

| Core data for environmental factors | |
|---|--|
| Financial problems | |
| Housing | |
| Support from extended family/community | |
| Other relevant factors | |

SERVICES INVOLVED

(The Lead Officer will have completed this section based on information within the notification form. Please add/amend details as necessary. If you are aware that a service involved with the family is not listed here, please provide details.)

| | Name of service | Name of staff member | Designation | Email | Telephone |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | |

Background:

History of your agency / professional involvement (including your knowledge of the circumstances relating to referral for review)

Chronology of Events:

Where a direct lift of text is from a system/record then this should be placed in italics and use of normal text is to be used to indicate the entry is either summarised or annotated text from the actual record.

| Organ-isation | Source | Recorded by (Name & Designation) | Event Date/Time | Significant Event | Outcome/ Action taken |
|----------------------|---------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Please list/outline key issues, including:

- Were there strategies and actions to minimise harm?
- Was there evidence of Information sharing?
- Was there recognition and assessment of risk?
- Was timely and effective action taken?
- Was there evidence of planning and review?
- How good was the record keeping?
- Were legal measures used appropriately?

Good Practice:

(This space should be used to note any positive outcomes about areas of practice both within your own agency and on a wider basis)

Poor Practice

(This space should be used to note any concerns about areas of practice both within your own agency and on a wider basis)

Any particular sensitivities (e.g. legal issues as advised by PF/Police, or cases where there are likely to be disciplinary proceedings)

Recommendations:

Please highlight any areas which your agency/service thinks may require further consideration.

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of person completing this form: | |
| Agency: | |
| Contact telephone number | |
| Date form submitted to CPC Lead Officer | |

| |
|--|
| Lead contact for your agency |
| <p><i>Name:</i></p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Telephone:</p> <p>e-mail:</p> |

| |
|---|
| <i>Further Information</i> |
| <p>Should further clarification be required please contact the Child Protection Committee Chair [Insert contact details] or Child Protection Lead Officer [Insert contact details].</p> |

Section 2: The facts

Sub headings may, for example, include:

- *Details of incident*
- *Current situation regarding child*
- *Antecedents of child*
- *Family background of child*
- *Antecedents of mother*
- *Family background of mother*
- *Antecedents of father*
- *Family background of father*
- *Referral to Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA)*
- *Criminal Proceedings*
- *Press Enquiries*

Section 3: Summary of Involvement:

A chronological summary of key events taken from the initial case review agency reports, submitted by all partners, highlighting noteworthy contacts, events which may have signalled concern and other relevant impact factors which provide an overview of the circumstances leading to why the case was believed to have potentially met the criteria for a Significant Case Review.

Section 4: Analysis

Critically assess issues which have been highlighted during the initial case review, e.g. information sharing, recognition and assessment of risk, use of effective strategies, planning & review and use of legal measures etc.

Section 5: Key Issues

Following from the facts and analysis, clearly identify the key areas that impacted on the child and agency responses and how these came about.

Section 6: Learning

Highlight key learning points from the review. This should include both strengths and areas for improvement.

Section 7: Recommendations or Findings

Section 8: Further Review

(NB: only to be completed if decision is made to progress to SCR; otherwise this section should be removed from final version of ICR Report)

(This section should include areas the ICR Panel has already identified as requiring further enquiry. This section will help inform the terms of reference for the SCR Panel)

PART B – For completion by ICR/SCR Panel

RECORD OF DECISIONS AND RATIONALE

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Case Review No: | |
| Date of ICR/SCR Report: | |

ICR/SCR Panel

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Decisions made: | |
| Rationale: | |
| Date: | |

Child Protection Committee

| | |
|--|--|
| Date notified of above decision(s) | |
| Note of comments/discussion by Child Protection Committee | |
| Decision(s) made: | |
| Rationale: | |
| Date: | |

| Chief Officers | |
|--|--|
| Date notified of above decision(s): | |
| Note of comments/discussion by Chief Officers | |
| Decision(s) made: | |
| Rationale: | |
| Date: | |

Appendix 4

SCR Exemplar Template OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE-PERSONAL (once completed)

| | |
|---|--|
| Core data – child | |
| Child's identifier | |
| Age of child | |
| Gender | |
| Sexual orientation | |
| Disability | |
| Health needs (including mental health and/or learning difficulties) | |
| Education | |
| Living circumstances prior to incident | |
| Position in family/number of siblings | |
| Ethnicity | |
| Religion | |
| Nature of injury/cause of death | |

| | |
|---|--|
| | |
| Legal status of child | |
| CP registration | |
| Agencies/Services involved | |
| Parent/carer factors | |
| Age | |
| Mental health issues | |
| Disability | |
| Health needs (including mental health and/or learning difficulties) | |
| Substance use (if applicable) | |
| Convictions (if applicable) | |
| Relevant information about childhood (if applicable) | |
| Domestic abuse (if applicable) | |
| Antisocial behaviour (if applicable) | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Ethnicity | |
| Religion | |
| Marital/relationship status e.g. co-habitation | |
| Living circumstances | |
| Agencies/Services involved | |
| Environmental factors | |
| Financial problems | |
| Housing | |
| Support from extended family/ community | |
| Other relevant factors | |
| | |

Introduction

This should include the circumstances that led to the review, the purpose and focus of the review, the periods considered and agencies involved, the extent of the family's/carers' involvement. Note how long the report has taken and reasons for any delays.

The facts

This should include the family background and circumstances, including agency involvement.

A chronology of significant events, (which should also include when the child was seen and by whom and whether the child's views were sought) should also be included. Where appropriate, the chronology may be presented in a number of distinct phases and should be supplemented by a written account of what happened during each phase. A genogram may be a useful format to map out key relevant person, and families. In the reviewing of the case, a full chronology will be required but for the purpose of the report, the primary aim at this stage is to highlight areas of practice or events that are considered by the review to be particularly relevant, not to provide an overly detailed account of events. As such the full chronology should not be included within the body of the report. Details of all significant adults in the child's life should also be included.

Analysis

This section should critically assess the key circumstances of the case, the interventions offered, decisions made etc. For example, were the responses appropriate, were key decisions justifiable, was the relevant information sought or considered, were there early, effective and appropriate interventions? Were any concerns about safety and/or wellbeing recognised? Was there a timely and appropriate response? Were the family and child's circumstances sufficiently assessed? Were compulsory/legal measures properly considered and was the child referred to the Children's Reporter? If so, when? It should always be

remembered that the review is taking place with the benefit of hindsight and the analysis should consider the actions of services within the context of the circumstances of the time.

Key issues

Following on from the analysis and depending on the circumstances of the case, the review should clearly identify the key areas that impacted on the child and agency responses and then explore these further to understand how they came about. This section should assist readers to understand the 'why' of what happened and a level of root cause analysis should be applied. It would be helpful to explore key areas within a framework of cause and effect factors – for example, resourcing, organisational culture, training, policies etc.

| |
|--|
| |
| Learning points |
| <p>This section should highlight the key learning points from the review – again the focus here should not be on ‘what happened’, but the reasons why it happened as it will be these areas that services and organisations can actively take forward and address. This section should also actively address strengths and good practice identified as well as the learning that has taken place since the case, any changes in practice and policy that have been implemented and the outcome of changes.</p> |
| Recommendations or if using SCIE model Findings and Issues |
| <p>These should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed</p> |

Executive summary

This report should provide a brief, anonymised account of the circumstances of the case and agency involvement. Chronologies should not be included. Analysis of the key events has to be sufficient to allow a context for the identification of the key issues and learning points but a balance has to be struck to ensure confidentiality issues are respected. The Learning Points, recommendations and action points should be replicated in full.

Appendices

These should include, if not already within the body of the report:

- Review Team membership
- Remit
- Chronology
- Files accessed
- People interviewed

SCIE Learning Together Model*

A SCIE Learning Together report is structured to a standard format to include an overview of the case, an appraisal of professional practice. It identifies findings rather than listing conclusions and recommended actions. The findings articulate succinctly what the issues have been found and record how this is evidenced through answering five key questions:

- How did the issue manifest in this case?

- What makes this an underlying issue rather than an issue particular to the individuals involved?
- How prevalent is the issue?
- How widespread is the pattern?
- What are the implications for the reliability of the system?

Findings are themed together under the following patterns using a systems typology and listed in priority as defined by the review team:

- Management systems
- Family-professional interaction
- Tools (human interaction with)
- Responses to incidents
- Longer term work
- Cognitive/emotional bias

Rather than make recommendations, each finding asks questions of the CPC to help the members come to a decision as to how to resolve the issue and ensure the CPC has measures in place to know when the issue has resolved. The responsibility for implementing change rests within the CPC and its partner agencies.

*Learning Together reviews must be undertaken by accredited Lead Reviewers.

²² GIRFEC Briefings for practitioners – Scottish Government – August 2012

²³ Learning together to safeguard children: developing a multi-agency systems approach for case reviews – Fish, S., E. Munro, and S. Bairstow, 2008