

## Virtual Panel Guidance

The Virtual Panel Process Guidance	
<b>What is the purpose of Virtual panel?</b>	Oldham Safeguarding Children Partnership has developed a core virtual panel for the purpose of swiftly reviewing cases that are referred to the Partnership for consideration for Rapid Review.
<b>Who is the Panel?</b>	<p>The Panel is made up primarily of Senior Leads from the three statutory partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Designated Nurse/Head of Safeguarding – Oldham CCG (Chair)</li> <li>- Director for Children’s Social Care and Early Help</li> <li>- Superintendent/Detective Chief Inspector – GMP</li> </ul> <p>Other relevant partners will be invited into the panel as required.</p>
<b>What does the Panel do?</b>	<p>When a referral is received by the partnership, the Virtual Panel will determine whether or not the specific criteria for a Serious Child Safeguarding Case has been met and whether a Rapid Review should be undertaken. The Panel will also consider whether other multi-agency or single agency learning processes may be more appropriate.</p> <p>The Panel will consider whether a serious incident notification needs to be made to National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.</p> <p>In order to reach a decision, the Virtual Panel members will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the referral</li> <li>2. Identify if their own agency holds further information to inform the decision making</li> <li>3. Consider whether or not the criteria for Serious Incident Notification has been met and so warrants a notification to the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel.</li> <li>4. Consider whether a Rapid Review is required</li> <li>5. Ensure a clear rationale for the decision is documented and shared with the OSCP Business manager</li> <li>6. Ensure that any further processes are agreed i.e. commence a Rapid Review / Request CPR Subgroup to take forward a learning process / Case Escalation / No Further Action / Single Agency process</li> <li>7. Consider at what stage parents (and child where appropriate) should be informed of any review and by whom</li> </ol>

<p><b>What are the criteria for a Serious Child Safeguarding Case?</b></p>	<p>Serious Child Safeguarding cases are those in which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- abuse or neglect is known or suspected <b>and</b></li> <li>- the child has died or been seriously harmed</li> </ul> <p><i><b>Serious Harm is defined as 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.</b></i></p> <p>Panel members should reflect on how the case referred is distinct from other Child Protection cases as a result of the level of harm being seen.</p>
<p><b>What are the criteria for a Serious Incident Notification to National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel?</b></p>	<p>If the above criteria for Serious Child Safeguarding case has been met, then the Local Authority must notify the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel <b>within five working days</b> of becoming aware that the incident has occurred. This is still applicable in circumstances whereby the child, while normally resident in the local authority’s areas, dies or is seriously harmed outside of England.</p> <p>The Local Authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a child looked after has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.</p>
<p><b>The Panel must consider the following guidance when making their decision:</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the case highlight or may highlight improvements needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including where those improvements have been previously identified?</li> <li>2. Does the case highlight or may highlight recurrent themes in the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children?</li> <li>3. Does the case highlight or may highlight concerns regarding two or more organisations or agencies working together effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children?</li> <li>4. Is the case one in which the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel have considered and concluded a local review may be more appropriate?</li> </ol>	
<p><b>The Panel should also have regard to the following circumstances:</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where the safeguarding partners have cause for concern about the actions of a single agency</li> </ol>	

2. Where there has been no agency involvement, and this gives safeguarding partners cause for concern
3. Where more than one local authority, police area or clinical commissioning group is involved, including cases where families have moved around
4. Where the case may raise issues relating to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children in institutional settings

**Reminder:**

- Some cases may not meet the definition of serious child safeguarding case but nevertheless raise issues of importance to the local area, e.g. good practice, poor practice or near misses. The Panel may decide to undertake a review in these circumstances.
- The specific criteria on page 84 of Working Together 2018, will be unpicked fully in the Rapid Review Panel when more information is collected. The focus at the Virtual Panel decision stage is on whether a Rapid Review process needs to be triggered.