

# Policy Briefing

## WAKEFIELD & DISTRICT safeguarding children board

### Serious Case Reviews – Revised Chapter 8 of Working Together to Safeguard Children

On the 12 March 2009 Lord Laming published his Report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress report*. In his report, Lord Laming made a number of recommendations to strengthen and clarify the serious case review process. His recommendations were accepted in full by Government with an undertaking to update statutory guidance set out in Chapter 8 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. The revised guidance aims to improve the quality, consistency and impact of serious case reviews and is directed in particular at Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) who by law undertake a serious case review whenever a child dies or is seriously injured and abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor.

The consultation document has now been published on the DCSF website, and you are being encouraged to provide feedback on the content of the draft revisions. The closing date of the consultation is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

#### Key Issues:

- ❖ The circumstances in which a Safeguarding Children Board MUST undertake a Serious Case Review are unchanged.
- ❖ The circumstances in which a Safeguarding Children Board must *consider* a Serious Case Review are also unchanged.
- ❖ The draft revisions include a clearer statement about the purpose of a Serious Case Review in relation to the need to identify local lessons about safeguarding practice.
- ❖ The potential link between a Serious Case Review and the disciplinary process is made clearer
- ❖ The draft revisions make it clear that there are circumstances in which a Serious Case Review may not be required, but where the work of agencies still requires further exploration.
- ❖ The consultation document makes it clear that Serious Case Review Panels (the Panel that considers the case and recommends to the LSCB Chair whether a Serious Case Review should be undertaken or not MUST be chaired by an experienced person who is not a member of the Safeguarding Children Board or an employee of any of the agencies involved in the Serious Case Review. If the Safeguarding Children Board has an Independent Chair, they *can* chair the Serious Case Review Panel meeting.
- ❖ The timescale for completion of a Serious Case Review is increased from four to six months.
- ❖ In relation to the authors of Overview Reports, these should be people who are independent of the Safeguarding Children Board and of all agencies involved in the Serious Case Review.

The consultation document can be accessed and completed online at  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations)

Further information can be obtained from the Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board on 01924 302625 or [wdsb@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:wdsb@wakefield.gov.uk)