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Consultation Document

Protecting Children in Wales Arrangements for Multi-Agency Child Practice Reviews: Draft Guidance

Date of issue: 9 January 2012

Responses by: 2 April 2012

Overview

This consultation seeks the views of all statutory partners on Local Safeguarding Children Boards on the proposed new arrangements for Multi-Agency Child Practice Reviews which will replace the current Serious Case Review process.

How to respond

Responses to this consultation should be used using the attached questionnaire either via post or e-mail to the following address:

Rebecca Powell
Safeguards Team
Welsh Government
2nd Floor
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

ChildPracticeReviewConsultation@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales:
An examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews
<http://wales.gov.uk/cssiwsite/newcssiw/publications/ourfindings/allwales/2009/sercase/?lang=en>

Plenary statement by the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services on future framework for learning from serious case reviews <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=209040&ds=2%2F2011#future-frame>

Contact Details. For further information:

Name: Rebecca Powell

Address: Safeguards Team
Welsh Government
2nd Floor
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Email: Rebecca.powell2@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 029 2082 1518

Data Protection: How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

What are the main issues?

The aim of this draft guidance is to set out the proposed new arrangements for Multi-Agency Child Practice Reviews in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected. Feedback from consultation will inform the final practice guidance as well as the future review of *Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004*.

Where are we now? Why change?

On 1 February 2011, the Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services, Gwenda Thomas AM, made a statement to the National Assembly setting out proposals to replace the current Serious Case Review procedure with new Child Practice Reviews (CPR). She referred to the work that had been carried out and set out the Welsh Government's future intentions for the implementation arrangements.

This new process stems from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales published report in October 2009 titled *Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales: An Examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews*. The report made recommendations to construct a new, more coherent framework for reviewing, learning and improving policy and practice in child protection, which would embed learning into everyday action.

Proposals were subsequently progressed by a practitioner and policy based group – the Serious Case Review Advisory Group – which recommended a tiered approach with different types of reviews which are dependent on the nature of the incident and circumstances of the child involved. The main categories of the new tiered approach are defined as 'concise' and 'extended' reviews, and will be underpinned by ongoing multi-agency professional forums.

Protecting Children in Wales, Arrangements for Multi-Agency Child Practice Reviews, sets out arrangements for CPRs in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected.

The proposals

The new framework has a number of important features which mark it out from the present serious case review system:

- it involves agencies, staff and families in a collective endeavour to reflect and learn from what has happened in order to improve practice in the future, with a focus on accountability and not on culpability;
- it has the potential to develop more competent and confident multi-agency practice in the long term, where staff have a better understanding of the knowledge base and perspective of different professionals with whom they work;

- it strengthens the accountability of managers to take responsibility for the context and culture in which their staff are working and to see that they have the support and resources they need;
- it recognises the impact of the tragic circumstances of non-accidental child deaths or serious harm on families and on staff, and provides opportunities for serious incidents to be reviewed in a culture that is experienced as fair and just by all concerned;
- it takes a more streamlined, flexible and proportionate approach to reviewing and learning from what are inevitably complex cases;
- it allows a more constructive use of resources that in the current system and works to shorter timescales;
- it uses the learning from other related review processes and increases compatibility with different review systems;
- it focuses on key learning identified through the review process which results in relevant recommendations and action to improve future practice, recorded in anonymised reports which are published by Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Consultation Questions

Consultation Response Form

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email/telephone number:

Your address:

The following questions relate to the Preface

1. Does the preface establish properly the context for the draft practice guidance?
2. Is the difference between current Serious Case Review system and the new approach to learning and reviewing clearly laid out and transparent?

The following questions relate to Section 2 – Principles

3. Are the principles underpinning the new arrangements sufficiently clear and relevant?
4. Is there any further information that should be included?

The following questions relate to Section 3 – Learning and Reviewing Framework

5. Does this section explain clearly the key features of the new framework?
6. Is there any further information that should be included?

The following questions relate to Section 4 – Multi-Agency Professional Forums

7. Does this section explain clearly the role and purpose of Multi-Agency Professional Forums?
8. Is there any further information that should be included?

The following questions relate Section 5 – Concise Reviews

9. Does this section explain clearly the criteria for Concise Reviews?
10. Are there any potential issues, which need clarification, for *Review Groups* in negotiating appropriate arrangements for a review with other Boards and other parallel review systems, and in dealing with cross-border arrangements?

11. Chronologies have been replaced by timelines which will normally be 12 months only – is this problematic?
12. Is there sufficient independence in the proposed appointment of a reviewer?
13. Is there any further information that should be included?

The following questions relate to Section 6 – Extended Reviews

14. Does this section explain clearly the purpose and criteria for Extended Reviews?
15. Are the additional issues to be addressed for scrutiny appropriate?
16. Is the appointment of two reviewers appropriate and viable?
17. Is there any further information that should be included?

The following questions relate to *both* Concise and Extended Reviews

18. Are the responsibilities set out for the *Review Panel* in setting up and managing Concise and Extended Reviews through to completion clear and logical? If not, please specify further information which would be helpful.
19. Are the proposals for the involvement of family members and for their perspectives to contribute to the review sufficiently clear?
20. The intention is for LSCBs, in accordance with the principles of transparency and accountability, to publish on their websites anonymised reports of Concise and Extended Child Practice Reviews. Do you foresee any difficulties?

The following questions relate to the Annex

21. Are the templates for communicating the recommendation to set up a review and for completing a report at the conclusion of a review useful? Please specify what further information or guidance would assist those responsible.
22. Learning events with practitioners are at the heart of the review process. Is there any further information in the *Guide* (Annex 1) that would be helpful?
23. Would a toolkit for the facilitation of learning events be helpful? If so, what would you wish to see in the toolbox?

The following questions relate to the document as a whole

24. Do you think the draft guidance is structured in a way that aids ease of access and reference? If not are you able to suggest alternatives?
25. We welcome any further comments/views about this draft guidance.

Responses to consultations may be made public – on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to be kept confidential, please tick here: