



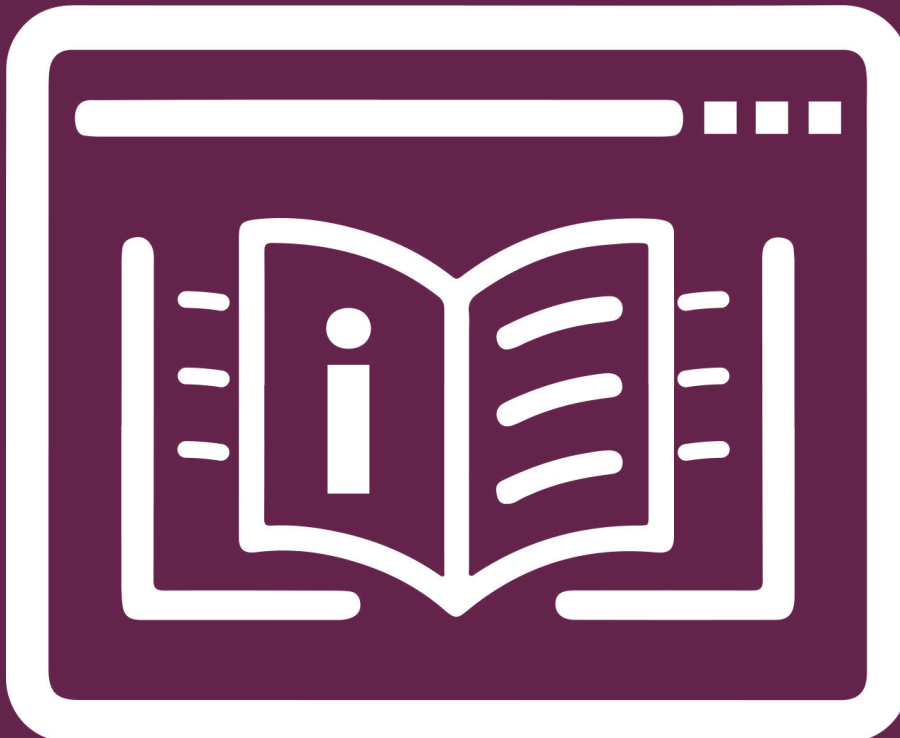
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Single Unified Safeguarding Review

A Guide for Organising and Facilitating
Learning Events



Foreword

This guide is intended for the use of Single Unified Safeguarding Review Panels and Reviewers. It explains where the Learning Event fits in the overall review process; expands on roles and tasks and gives examples of methods and approaches for engaging practitioners and managers in reflection and learning.

The guide should be used in conjunction with the statutory guidance, [Single Unified Safeguarding Review \(October 2024\)](#).

When reading this guide, it is important to recognise that there is no one way of running a Learning Event or a set and unvarying agenda for every event. One size definitely does not fit all! Learning Events will differ in shape and structure depending on a variety of factors, such as numbers of participants, the situation under review and the context and circumstances which led to the need for review. In order to succeed in their task, Learning Events need to be flexible.

However, what they all have in common is that they are about identifying and understanding the emerging learning. They are not investigations; they are not interrogations; they are not about blame. In other words, they are reflective spaces in which to explore, to find meaning and to increase understanding.

The learning which emerges and develops throughout the course of the review is on three levels:

Personal

The who does it

What the individual involved in the review (as Panel Member, Chair, Reviewer or a participant in a Learning Event) learns.

Professional

The how it is done

What is learnt about practice and professional intervention in a situation; what works and what will benefit from changes and adjustments.

Organisational

The context in which it is done

The systems, processes, procedures and guidance that provide a framework and mandate for professional practice.

The SUSR report brings together these strands of learning into a coherent whole which can then inform future practice and processes.

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Introduction

- 1.1 Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) is a learning and reviewing framework and is intended to provide an appropriate environment in which practitioners and their agencies can learn from their work. It is important, therefore, that attention is given to creating the conditions for learning from the very beginning of the process of the review.
- 1.2 A key component of the SUSR is a facilitated practitioner-focused Learning Event which is led by the Reviewers, with the Panel Chair in attendance. This event brings together relevant practitioners and first line managers who were involved in the situation under review, in order that they can share their understanding of what happened and identify key learning points for future practice.
- 1.3 The entire SUSR process is supported by the Business Unit of the Safeguarding Board, and a member of the Business Unit may be present at the Learning Event to ensure all practical matters are attended to so that the event can run as smoothly as possible.
- 1.4 Reviewing serious and complex situations can raise much anxiety in individuals and organisations and, in turn, this anxiety can block learning and lead to defensiveness, with a consequent inability to reflect. The Reviewers have an important role in the management of this anxiety and, therefore, need to be engaged in the review process at an early stage, so that they are able to establish a close and positive working relationship with the Review Panel. If strategies to recognise and manage anxiety are put in place from the onset of the SUSR, then the greater the possibility that when practitioners and first line managers gather for the Learning Event, they will be more open to reviewing, reflecting and participating.

Creating the conditions for learning

- 1.5. Learning is about progress, about developing and moving forward. The SUSR brings people together in groups to work collaboratively, to share ideas and to enhance understanding. The group, therefore, has to be an effective entity in order that the task can be achieved.
- 1.6. Ensuring effectiveness requires several preconditions¹. Firstly, the individuals who make up the group need to feel safe in order that they can begin to open up and connect with other group members. If safety and openness are features of the group, then a modicum of trust will build between participants, which will lead on to achieving the real work of the group; that of appropriate and constructive questioning and challenge, resulting in the development of ideas and action plans.
- 1.7. The creation of feelings of safety is a key foundation that must begin to happen from the very start of the review process. Clarifying objectives, setting out purpose and being transparent about expectations all help to minimise defensiveness and manage the inevitable anxiety within organisations, systems and individuals.
- 1.8. The building of trust within a group and the move towards challenge and change is not necessarily a linear process. At any point, trust within the group can be lost for any number of reasons. Facilitating the process therefore requires constant monitoring of the group and sometimes a rebuilding of safety to restore openness and communication (see Appendix 1).

The Reviewers

- 1.9. Reviewers must be independent of the case management of the situation under review. They may be a member of the Regional Safeguarding Board or from another Board area, or a person with relevant experience as required by the case.
- 1.10. The role of the Reviewer is multi-faceted, as it includes: managing the task; helping to facilitate the process; managing and facilitating the learning of the group; and drafting a SUSR report.
- 1.11. It follows, therefore, that the role requires a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities including:
 - The knowledge and skill base of their own profession
 - A thorough knowledge of safeguarding systems, issues and practice
 - An understanding of the roles and responsibilities of practitioners, organisations and services within the inter-agency safeguarding network
 - The capacity to share all of the above; in other words, the ability to 'talk practice'
 - An understanding of the nature of multi-disciplinary working
 - An understanding of how adults learn
 - An understanding of group dynamics
 - Skills in facilitating and managing group process
 - The ability to shape an event but also to work in the moment with what participants bring to the group.
- 1.12. In addition to the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above, Reviewers also have to think about how to work effectively alongside one another. If they have never worked together before, this will mean spending some time getting to know one another and what they each bring to the review in terms of professional knowledge, skills and styles of working.

Preparation

- 2.1. At this stage of preparation leading up to the Learning Event, there are four main areas that the Reviewers have to focus on, and they are:
 - Engaging with and working alongside the Review Panel and the Panel Chair (See Appendix 2 for roles and responsibilities of Panel Members and the Panel Chair)
 - Building an in-depth understanding of the situation under review
 - With the help of Panel Members, developing an understanding of who will be attending the Learning Event and why
 - Planning the event itself with regard to structure and methods of facilitation.
- 2.2. Careful preparation is crucial in terms of promoting a learning environment, managing anxiety and paving the way for 'success'.

- 2.3. Dates of Review Panel Meetings need to be set up. The number of meetings and frequency will vary depending on the situation under review, but they are an important part of the SUSR process. They help to bring the Review Team together within a culture of collaborative problem solving to review and assess available information, clarify issues for further exploration and to identify any gaps or deficiencies in the information available to the review. When Reviewers, Panel Member and the Panel Chair work well together, they bring to the task the ability to reflect, to analyse and to look at the wider impact for practice and service delivery. In other words, they contribute to the emerging learning.
- 2.4. Initial Panel Meetings in this preparatory stage will be concentrating on the practicalities, such as:
- Thinking about frequency of Panel meetings and setting provisional dates
 - Revisiting terms of reference and making any adjustments if necessary
 - Giving consideration to engaging family members in the review; identifying who to approach and thinking about how to do this sensitively
 - Giving some thought to the Learning Event in terms of possible participants, date, venue and duration. Most events will probably take a day on average. However, occasionally in very complex situations they may take longer. If they do have to extend into a second day (and this is very rare) it is recommended that they are not consecutive days. A gap between the days gives an opportunity for further thought and preparation by the participants.

The stage of clarification

- 2.5. It is important that the Reviewers receive all timelines and summaries as soon as possible after the deadline for submission. This will allow them time for a first reading to identify main points, note what 'strikes' them about the situation and to see whether or not there are any gaps in information or any areas that need clarification. It is important to note that this is a learning process and not an investigation, so whilst information is necessary to understand who did what and when, in order to learn it is essential that Reviewers are able to analyse, contextualise and explore what led practitioners to make the decisions and take the actions they did at the time.
- 2.6. During this stage of the review, Panel meetings will be concentrating on:
- Clarifying and filling any gaps in the information presented in the timeline; although it should also be recognised that it might not be possible to know some things until the event itself
 - Identifying issues and hypotheses to be tested out and explored at the Learning Event
 - Confirming who will be attending the Learning Event and ensuring they are adequately prepared
 - Confirming date, venue and duration of the event and who will be present in the role of note-taker
 - Confirming how family members are to be involved in the review, and who will meet with them and when.

2.7. Panel members have a crucial role to play in helping participants prepare for the Learning Event. This includes meeting with them, briefing them and helping them think about how to prepare for the event. This preparation is supported by a letter of invitation. It is recommended that such a letter is kept short and simple, but makes clear that there is an expectation of attendance and offers the opportunity for direct contact with the Reviewers if someone has additional questions and queries about the event. It is also helpful if people are given a structure around which to prepare.

A sample letter of invitation at Appendix 3 suggests they think about their involvement in terms of:

- Assessments
- Decision making
- Actions
- Interactions with other professionals and services
- Areas of effective practice
- Areas where there could be some improvements.

2.8. If relevant individuals to the review wish to engage with the review process by meeting with the Reviewers and/or the Panel Chair, then it is best done before the Learning Event so that their thoughts and opinions can be woven into the programme for the Event and inform any conclusions and action plans. These individuals will be different for every review, and the panel will need to give careful consideration to who should be invited to engage in the process. Such individuals could include:

- the review subject
- family members (such as parents, step-parents, carers, siblings, grandparents, spouses, or other significant family members)
- principal individuals (such as friends, community representatives/ support services, neighbours, colleagues, faith and community leaders or employers) known by the subject of the Review
- Perpetrators/alleged perpetrators.

Guidance has been developed to help Chairs and Reviewers in engaging with relevant individuals to a review: [**Engagement Flow Chart for Chairs and Reviewers \(September 2024\)**](#), as well as a bespoke guide to assist Chairs and Reviewers in considering engagement with perpetrators 'Engaging with Perpetrators/Alleged Perpetrators: Guidance for Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) Reviewers and Chairs'. Please contact the SUSR Team for a copy of this at [**SUSRWales@gov.wales**](mailto:SUSRWales@gov.wales)

2.9. The purpose of engaging with family members is to explore their perspective and to elicit their opinions of the services who were involved in their lives and the lives of the child or adult who is the subject of the SUSR. This will include what they found helpful or unhelpful and their suggestions for how services to children, families and adults could be improved. Their thoughts, opinions and feelings contribute to the overall learning of the review. The venue for such meetings will differ depending on circumstances. It is best if it is a neutral and comfortable space, but it should be accessible to and acceptable for family members.

- 2.10. The Learning Event will need to capture discussions and contributions, and so it is important to identify a note-taker for the event. Ideally this would be someone who is skilled in taking accurate and coherent notes, who has an understanding of the territory, but who will not actively participate in the process of the Learning Event. There needs to be good rapport between note-taker and Reviewers and so thought should be given at the preparation stage as to how they are to work together. What the note-taker is producing is a working document from which the Reviewers can draft a review report.

The Event

- 3.1. The purpose of the Learning Event is to bring together key staff to reflect and learn from what has happened in order to improve practice in the future. Using a systems approach the emphasis is on understanding what happened; considering why some assessments and decisions were made and what can be learned for the future (see Appendix 4 for the components of an effective systemic model). A systems approach does not stop at the point when shortcomings in professional practice have been identified, it moves on to explore the interaction of the individual within the wider context in order to understand why things developed in the way they did².
- 3.2. The central idea is that any professional's performance is a result both of their own skills and knowledge, and of the organisational setting in which they are working. The SUSR process and the Learning Event, therefore, must focus on understanding how people saw things at the time, why things happened as they did, what belief systems were operating and how capabilities and capacity were affected by the roles and positions adopted by family members and other professionals, together with the emotional impact of the work and the resources available.
- 3.3. Therefore, in order to meet the objectives of the review and the Learning Event, attention to setting is important. The venue, as well as the structure of the day, must facilitate the process and so it needs to be arranged in such a way that participants can see one another and develop a conversation together. Rooms laid out in boardroom style or horseshoes or circles should assist this, together with space to move in and out of small groups and sub-sets, and walls or display boards where timelines and flips can be pinned up.
- 3.4. Equally important is the provision of refreshments and, if the Learning Event is to be held over a day, providing lunch will help participants to continue working and thinking together in a less formal way and avoid disrupting the process.
- 3.5. As part of the preparation for the Learning Event, consideration should be given to the well-being support of those attending, especially if the situation under review is highly emotive. Venues with a break-out room are helpful, which could provide a quiet space for a participant who is feeling particularly overwhelmed, as well as identifying an appropriate person to support a distressed individual.

Structure

- 3.6. A Learning Event is different from a traditional training event in that it requires the facilitators to work in the moment with the material generated by the group rather than follow a set programme of inputs and structured exercise. However, in order for the event to have some coherency, for participants to engage with and work on the task in hand and arrive at some conclusions, it does need shape and structure without being over-structured.
- 3.7. Thinking about the stages in the group dynamic provides a guide to the overall structure of the day. Heron's model³ (see Appendix 5) highlights the need to break through the initial defensiveness of the group, to 'warm' them up in order that they can connect and communicate with one another and begin to be productive and work on the task in hand. Endings are equally important so that learning and actions can be identified for participants to take away and use in their ongoing work, and plans formulated to develop practice and services more generally. (See Appendix 6 for two examples of structures for Learning Events).
- 3.8. This guide has already talked about the need to address possible defensiveness and to begin to generate safety early in the process, but careful attention to the beginnings of the Learning Event continues and reinforces this. Therefore, the start of the Learning Event should cover the following areas:
- Introductions to the Reviewers, the Panel Chair and the note taker
 - A round of introductions to the participants asking them to specify their role, together with a very brief initial explanation of why and when they were involved in the situation under review
 - Clarification of purpose and process of the event
 - Setting some working principles or ground rules for the event and checking that everyone agrees with them (an example of Working Principles can be found at Appendix 7)
 - Agreeing to call the subject of the review by their name throughout the event
 - Setting out an overview of the situation under review and the questions to be addressed by the learning event encapsulated in the terms of reference
 - Drawing attention to the timelines.
- 3.9. Once the scene has been set and the purpose clarified, then the Learning Event moves into the main task which is one of identifying key points, looking at who did what, when and why, highlighting assessments and decision-making and noticing effective practice as well as shortcomings.
- 3.10. As the story unfolds, it will be important to ask participants to differentiate between their thoughts and actions at the time and the wisdom of hindsight afforded by retrospective reflection. In other words it is about exploring the question 'why did we do that then?' and following it up with 'could we have done it differently and what would have helped us to do so?'

- 3.11. As the discussion and thinking develops within the group, the Reviewers should ensure the following areas are covered:
- Were the risks in the situation identified and understood?
 - How were family members engaged with?
 - What were the family's views at the time and what are they now?
 - How did the professionals work together?
 - What went well? This is about identifying effective practice and what facilitated that good practice
 - What could have been done better, what actions would have been more effective and why did it not happen at the time?
- 3.12. To help people make sense of their learning and to keep moving through the process it is important that, at appropriate points, the Reviewers pause and summarise the discussion. This will also assist in the identification of emerging learning points and possible recommendations for future action.
- 3.13. Attention has already been drawn to the importance of well-structured endings to a Learning Event. At this final stage, there are several aspects that need to be covered, and these include both individual and group learning; learning about the situation under discussion and learning about the process, together with strategies to ensure all of this can be taken back into practice. The tasks to be completed at this final stage are, therefore:
- To summarise the key learning points about the situation under review
 - To broadly agree the content of the learning output and possible areas for recommending actions and changes
 - To outline the next steps
 - To give participants an opportunity to think about their personal learning from the day and how to take it forward
 - To engage in some evaluation of the learning event as a whole, including checking out how participants feel about the process (A sample evaluation form can be found at Appendix 8).
- 3.14. To work through all the stages of the Learning Event and to arrive at an outcome requires the Reviewers to give some thought to styles and modes of facilitation. Heron's model⁴ (see Appendix 9) suggests three approaches, all of which are valid depending on the task in hand and how the group is managing that task.
- 3.15. Beginning the Learning Event requires strong leadership from the facilitators in terms of setting the scene and clarifying the process. This is the facilitators in 'hierarchical' mode or leading from the front. As the event gets underway and discussion develops, then the facilitators may move into co-operative mode, very much working alongside the group. Participants themselves may suggest a way of working and so for a time the group is leading, with the facilitators in a supportive role. It is important that the facilitators are able to move through each of these modes, as appropriate, to suit the needs of both the programme and the group. So, for instance, if the group becomes stuck or discussions go off at a tangent then the facilitators will need to move back into hierarchical mode in order to ensure things get back on track.

3.16. If a Learning Event has to reconvene because the work could not be completed in the time allotted, then careful recapping and reminding of what has emerged so far will be essential in order to help participants back into the learning and reflection.

Methods

3.17. To help the group think about and make sense of a situation necessitates the Learning Event having shape and structure, but it also calls for a variety of materials and methods to assist discussion and sense-making. Both the terms of reference and the merged timeline should be visible and available to participants. The timeline could be pinned up around the walls. If the situation under review contains particular issues such as neglect, then it might be helpful to take along some useful references to aid thinking.

3.18. There are a variety of methods which can be employed, including:

- Focused questions to guide discussion and trigger thinking
- Dividing into small groups with specific areas to consider. To capture discussion, the subsets can be asked to record the main points on flips.
- Large group discussion to identify the significant events in a situation from the merged timelines, then smaller subsets looking at each of these events to think about:
 - What actions were taken?
 - Why were they taken?
 - What else could have been done at the time?
 - Why did it not happen?
- Reviewers feeding in their thoughts of what 'struck' them when reading timelines and summaries as a means of generating discussion
- Asking the group to identify a piece of effective practice and analyse its component parts
- Having blank sheets of flip paper on the wall to note down significant learning points as they arise or any ideas for subsequent actions
- Using 'post its' to add any additional significant events to the merged timeline as they are uncovered.

3.19. The above is not an exhaustive list, and flexibility is essential in their use, as some methods might not suit some groups. It is suggested that the Reviewers go prepared with a 'toolkit' of methods so that if something is not working, they have other things to fall back on.

Some practice examples

To move from introductions into reflection: telling the story

- Using the merged timeline as a guide, the facilitators ask each participant to describe their involvement in the situation. This might be best done in chronological order and will include both the what and the why
- As this is happening, the group and facilitators actively listen and ask questions to seek clarification
- At the end of each contribution or period of time covered, the facilitators summarise the main points
- Any significant issues emerging or early learning points are noted on a flip
- At the end of this session, participants are given some time in pairs or trios to process what they have heard and to flag up what has struck them.

To move from telling the story to analysis

In pairs, participants move around the timeline and identify what they perceive to be significant events in the situation. Mixed pairings (i.e. from different professional backgrounds) will help to deepen understanding of differing perspectives, roles and knowledge.

These are charted on flips with some discussion about why they are perceived as significant. It is at this point that the facilitators can also add in what has struck them, as well as feed in the impressions of any family members who may have been seen in advance of the event.

Discussion about these significant points can then address the following questions:

1. What actions were taken and why?
2. What, if anything, could have been done differently? Why was it not done?
3. What would have helped at the time?
4. What did we do well?

To move into summarising and clarifying learning points

- The facilitators summarise what has been covered and what has emerged
- Participants then give some individual thought to what they have learnt
- Large group discussion about how this learning might be translated into action points and this is captured on flips
- An end round of personal action plans, where each participant says one thing they are going to do as a result of everything that has been discussed and covered in the event.

After the Event

Preparation of the SUSR Report

- 5.1. After the Learning Event, the task of the Reviewers is to collate and synthesise all the material from the event. This will include the record taken by the note-taker and any flips produced by the group, as well as their own impressions and analysis of what emerged from the discussions. These learning points, together with possible suggestions for recommendations and actions, and the analysis and learning generated by discussion in the Review Panel, then have to be transformed into a draft SUSR report using the agreed template.
- 5.2. The Review Panel has an important role to play in supporting the drafting of the report: by offering constructive suggestions; revisiting the original hypotheses formulated in early Panel meetings and considering if and how they have been addressed; and thinking about realistic and realisable recommendations which can be translated into an action plan. Once a draft SUSR report has been agreed by the Reviewers and the Panel then, together with a summary timeline, it can be presented to the Regional Safeguarding Board.

Presentation to the Regional Safeguarding Board

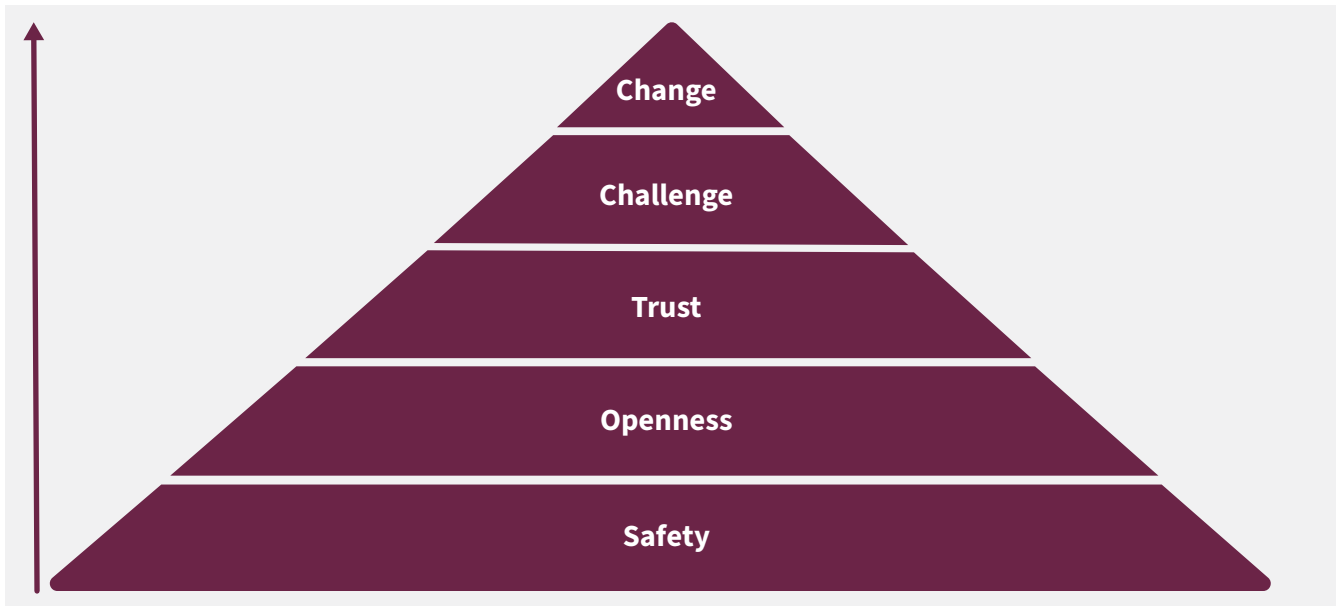
- 5.3. The draft SUSR report has to be presented to the Regional Safeguarding Board for agreement and action. It is important to describe the situation under review and take Board members through the timeline so that they understand the story and therefore the learning that has emerged. The presentation should also include a brief description of the learning event itself in terms of participants, process and impact.

Debrief

- 5.4. Ideally it can be helpful, though not always possible, for all those involved in the SUSR to have the opportunity for a debrief. This includes Reviewers, Panel members, Learning Event participants and any family members who have made a contribution to the review.
- 5.5. With regard to Learning Event participants, it is good practice for their link Panel member to contact them afterwards to check how they are, how they found the experience and what they have taken away from the day in terms of their personal learning.
- 5.6. At the final Panel meeting, as part of the agenda, some reflection on the process and what has been learnt from that would be very useful and helpful for any future SUSRs that they may be involved in. There is an SUSR Reflections Form for this purpose.
- 5.7. Careful feedback to any family members is a crucial part of this final stage of the SUSR. They need to have an opportunity to look at the report and to understand the learning that has emerged and the content of the action plan and how those actions are to be implemented. It is part of the role of the Reviewers and the Panel Chair to ensure that this feedback is undertaken sensitively and appropriately.

Appendix 1

Preconditions For Building Effective Group Relationships⁵



Safety

In any situation where personal, professional or organisational change is at stake, the issue of safety is fundamental to the effective working of a group. Without this, group members will be withdrawn and defensive and the main personal agenda for each participant will be personal survival. Conversation will be at the trivial, social level while people explore the motivation of others and the potential threat to themselves.

Openness

Only when people feel safe will they begin to move from projecting a purely impersonal public persona to revealing a more human image of themselves. Once this process begins, group members become able to be open and honest, both with each other and themselves. They are able to share feelings and emotions and become open about their own personal/professional agendas and issues they care about.

Trust

With this sharing emerges a feeling of trust in other members of the group. Once people can be relied on not to laugh, disparage or take advantage, then people will be very much more willing to take risks, both in what they attempt themselves and in how they interact with others, knowing that what they say will not be taken in the wrong spirit.

Challenge

In this trusting environment, group members can become truly challenging, in the sense of "constructive confrontation". Procedures, behaviour, perceptions can all be examined and reviewed. Correlation (or the lack of it) between motivation and the effect of behaviour can be checked out and fed back.

Change

As a direct result of such trusting and constructive encounters, genuine and permanent change or co-operation can then be expected.

Appendix 2

Roles and responsibilities

The Panel Chair

- Chairing Panel meetings
- Co-ordinating the work of the Panel
- Ensuring that the Terms of Reference for each Review are suitable and proportionate
- Where there is an ongoing criminal investigation or other parallel process to ensure that no conflict exists between the two processes
- Ensuring Panel members work within their role
- Ensuring the tasks of the Panel are completed throughout the review process
- Contributing to the learning emerging through the review process
- Meeting with family members, friends, support networks alongside the Reviewer as appropriate
- Attending the Learning Event
- Helping to feedback to the family, to friends and to support networks
- Being present at the presentation of the report to the Regional Safeguarding Board.

Panel Members

- To ensure due diligence
- To be familiar with the case, though not directly involved
- To provide a level of background knowledge of agency policies, procedures and protocols
- To make links between agencies where necessary
- To provide background knowledge and information about current or past contact with the family
- To work closely with the Chair and the Reviewers
- To produce a timeline on behalf of their agency and to objectively analyse that timeline against their agency's policies and procedure
- To provide constructive challenge to the Panel's analysis of the merged timeline
- To discuss the best approach to family contact and participation
- To prepare and support Learning Event attendees
- To share the agency timeline with Learning Event attendees
- Debrief Learning Event attendees after the event
- Scrutinise the draft report
- Keep senior managers appraised and informed about the review.

Appendix 3

Sample letter of invitation to the Learning Event

NB: this letter is intended to support the work of the relevant Panel Member in preparing participants from their service/organisation for the Learning Event. It is not a substitute for direct contact with and support for practitioners.

Dear

SUSR Learning Event in respect of... [review title]

Date:

Venue:

One of the features of a Single Unified Safeguarding Review [SUSR] is that it involves agencies, staff and families in a collective endeavour to reflect and learn from what has happened in order to improve and develop practice in the future.

In line with this a SUSR is being undertaken with regard to [add relevant context].

The review process uses a systems approach whereby the focus is on multi-agency professional practice with the aim of identifying underlying issues that are influencing practice more generally.

As part of this review terms of reference have been constructed and timelines prepared, but at the heart of the review is a Learning Event. It is this event to which you are invited as you were involved in work with [subject's name] and his/her family.

The Learning Event

The event is to be held at [Venue] on [date] starting at [time] and finishing at [time].

Lunch will be provided.

The Learning Event will identify key single and inter-agency issues, learning points and possible recommendations for consideration by the Regional Safeguarding Board.

The event will be facilitated by [name[s]] who will adopt a systems approach and structure the day to help participants reflect, think and learn together in a safe environment.

The family have been/are to be approached to see if they would like to contribute to the review by meeting with the Reviewers before the event. If they do any comments and observations they make will be woven into the discussions and reflections on the day.

Preparation for the event

It would be helpful if you could give some thought to your involvement with [subject's name] thinking specifically about:

- Assessments
- Decision making
- Actions
- Interactions with other professionals and services
- Challenges
- Areas of good practice
- Areas where there could be some improvements.

To help with your preparation you will also receive the following:

- The Terms of Reference of this SUSR
- Link to the SUSR Statutory Guidance
- Link to a video about SUSRs
- Link to a video about Learning Events with useful information for attendees.

We very much look forward to working with you at the Learning Event and hope you find this approach constructive and helpful. In the meantime if you have any queries or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Chair of the Review Panel

Appendix 4

A systemic approach

An effective systemic model has the following components:

- It is truly participatory and collective, involving all relevant professionals, managers, agencies, and families.
- All participants in the review contribute to the critical reflection and analysis of the situation under review and the development of strategies to support practice and improve processes and systems across agencies.
- It adopts an analytical and evidence-based approach.
- There is an appreciation that learning is not something 'done' to people but rather something that people themselves do and own.
- It takes learning to a deeper level by examining systems, structures, and cultural and contextual factors.
- It explores the interrelated and interdependent parts of different services and agencies and the impact this has had on the lived experience of the child or adult who is the subject of the review.
- It explores how user/human friendly systems are for children, families and adults, as well as for professionals.
- It does not focus solely on what went wrong but also includes an examination and analysis of effective practice.
- Learning does not just come at the end of the review once the report is published, there is a 'thread of learning' throughout the review process. The learning develops with each Review Panel meeting and professionals' event, as hypotheses are formulated and tested, and issues identified and explored.
- The learning from a review is disseminated and implemented in practice and in systems at both a local and a national level.

Appendix 5

Stages in the Group Dynamic⁶



Wintertime:

The ground may be frozen and the weather stormy.

This is the stage of defensiveness, usually at the outset of a group. Trust is low and anxiety is high.



Springtime:

New life starts to break through the surface crust.

This is the stage of working through defensiveness. The group is underway, trust is building and anxiety is reducing.



Summertime:

There is an abundance of growth and the sun is high.

This is the stage of authentic behaviour where the group is working hard and meeting its aims and objectives. Trust is high and anxiety is a spur to growth and change.



Autumn:

The fruit is harvested and stored, the harvesters give thanks and go their way.

This is the stage of closure. As the group draws to a close the members gather in and review the fruit of their learning and prepare to transfer it to life in the wider world outside.

Appendix 6

Structuring a Learning Event: two examples

Here are two suggestions for structuring a Learning Event. Whatever structure is used it is important that:

- Learning Event attendees come to the event well prepared with an understanding of the SUSR purpose and process and why they are part of it
- Practitioners are enabled to participate in the Learning Event, have an opportunity for reflection and their voice contributes directly to the Review.

Example 1

- Introductions and here ask people to give a sentence about their involvement which clarifies why they are present, as well as one word to describe how they are feeling. At the end of the round acknowledge the range of feelings in the room
- Clarify purpose and process
- Set ground rules/working principles, including ensuring child/young person/adult is referred to by name
- It is helpful to then show this power point slide.

NB hindsight can be a wonderful thing but not always helpful. It is not enough to say 'we should have' instead we must think about 'why did we not do it then?'

- After this careful introduction move into hearing from the participants as they 'tell the story' of their involvement with the situation under review
 - This is best done sequentially with reference to the timeline
 - After each person has told their part of the story invite the group to make comment, ask questions, do some wondering/hypothesising.
- Next hear the family's views and here it is helpful if there is an accompanying power point slide with the key messages. The facilitators then develop discussion and reflection on this.
- Small group work to enable participants to process everything that has been covered during the event. The focus questions are:
 - Could anything have been done differently?
 - What would have helped at the time?
 - Effective practice in this situation
 - Key learning points
 - Possible action points
- Careful feedback from each group.
- Endings
 - Summary of the main points to emerge
 - A round of personal action plans – 'one thing I am going to do as a result of everything we have discussed today'
 - Next steps in the process.

Example 2

- Introductions and here ask people to give a sentence about their involvement which clarifies why they are present, as well as one word to describe how they are feeling. At the end of the round acknowledge the range of feelings in the room
- Clarify purpose and process
- Set ground rules/working principles, including ensuring child/young person/adult is referred to by name
- It is helpful to then show this power point slide.

NB hindsight can be a wonderful thing but not always helpful. It is not enough to say 'we should have' instead we must think about 'why did we not do it then?'

- The facilitators give a very brief overview of the situation under review.
- Using the timeline as a prop and a prompt the Learning Event then moves into addressing four questions:

This can be done through a mixture of large group discussion and small groupwork depending on the number of participants:

- What were the main challenges in this situation?
 - What went well?
 - What could have been done differently and why did this not happen at the time?
 - Were there any potential missed opportunities and why were they missed?
- Hearing the views of the family and here it is helpful if there is an accompanying power point slide with the key messages. The facilitators then develop discussion and reflection on this.
- Small groupwork:

This next section of the Learning Event is an opportunity to process the learning so far and it works best when participants are divided into small mixed groups. The focus questions are:

- What are the key learning points that have emerged today?
 - What strategies for improving practice and systems would you suggest?
- Endings
 - Summary of the main points to emerge
 - A round of personal action plans – 'one thing I am going to do as a result of everything we have discussed today'
 - Next steps in the process.

Appendix 7

Working Principles for the Learning Event: an example

1. Each member of the group has a valid contribution to make which will be valued and listened to.
2. Where there are differences in views, these will be heard sensitively or questioned in a way which is constructive and enabling to the process of the group and its objectives.
3. We are all striving to challenge and address oppressive practices in our work and the whole group will share responsibility for addressing oppressive behaviour or language in a way which is sensitive and constructive.
4. Participants will support the principle of confidentiality about personal feelings or issues which are shared during our work together.
5. Naïve questions will be considered the norm.

And...? What else do you need to agree in order to participate fully and effectively?

Appendix 8

Sample evaluation form

Name:

Job Title/Role:

Date of Learning Event:

1. Did this Learning Event meet its objectives?
2. How do you rate this event?
3. What did you find most helpful?
4. What did you find least helpful?
5. Is there any learning from this event that you intend to take back into your work?
6. Any other relevant comments or suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for your participation and your assistance.

Appendix 9

Modes of Facilitation⁷

The hierarchical mode

Here the facilitator directs the learning process and does things for the group. This is leading from the front by thinking and acting on behalf of the group. Thus the facilitator decides on the objectives and the programme, interprets and gives meaning, challenges resistance, manages group feelings and provides structures for learning.

The co-operative mode

Here the facilitator shares power over the learning process and manages the different dimensions with the group. The facilitator enables and guides the group to become more self-directing and their view, though influential, is not final but one amongst many. Outcomes are always negotiated and learning processes are devised through collaboration.

The autonomous mode

Here the facilitator respects the total autonomy of the group and does not do things for or with them, but gives them freedom to find their own way, exercising their own judgement without any intervention on the facilitator's part. The bedrock of learning is unprompted, self-directed practice. It is not about the abdication of responsibility but rather the subtle art of creating conditions within which people can exercise full self-determination in their learning.