



The Child Death Review Process



A Quick Guide

What you must do if you become aware of a child who has died

Practitioners in all agencies should notify the Child Death Overview Panel Co-ordinator of the death of any child which they become aware of using a 'Notification Form' or by calling 101 ext 2724.

Immediate Decision Making

Whenever a child dies, practitioners should work together in responding to that death in a thorough, sensitive and supportive manner. The aims of this response are to:

- establish, as far as is possible, the cause of the child's death
- identify any modifiable contributory factors
- provide ongoing support to the family
- learn lessons in order to reduce the risk of future child deaths and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of other children
- Ensure that all statutory obligations are met.

Joint Agency Response

A 'joint agency response' is required if a child's death:

- is or could be due to external causes
- is sudden and there is no immediately apparent cause (including sudden unexpected death in infancy or in childhood)
- occurs in custody, or where the child was detained under the Mental Health Act
- occurs where the initial circumstances raise any suspicions that the death may not have been natural
- occurs in the case of a stillbirth where no healthcare professional was in attendance.

Unexplained Death of a Child

The child should normally be taken to an Emergency Department. In some cases when a child dies at home or in the community, the police may decide that it is not appropriate to move the child's body immediately.

In a criminal investigation, the police are responsible for collecting and collating all relevant information pertaining to the child's death. Practitioners should consult the lead police investigator and the CPS to ensure that their enquiries do not prejudice any proceedings.

Child Death Review Meeting

This is a multi-professional meeting taking place before the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) review. All matters relating to the child's death should be discussed by professionals. Meetings should be attended by professionals directly involved in the child's care.

Review of Death – CDOP

The review by the CDOP is intended to be the final scrutiny of a child's death by professionals. The information gathered using all the standardised templates helps agency partners to identify modifiable factors that could be altered to prevent future deaths.

Further information for practitioners to follow is set out in 'Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy and Childhood: Multi-agency Guidelines for Care and Investigation (2016)' and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.