



Home Office



Department
of Health &
Social Care

15 December 2021

Dear local authority chief executives, chief constables of police and accountable officers of clinical commissioning groups,

We thank you for everything that you and your workforces do every day to protect children in your local area. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing work of professionals across social work, health, policing, education and other agencies to keep our most vulnerable children safe in very challenging circumstances.

In light of a number of recent high-profile cases, including the deaths of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, Star Hobson and Ruby and Logan Monaghan, we are writing to set out the action government has taken to protect vulnerable children, and to re-emphasise your important role as safeguarding partners.

Following the death of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, the Secretary of State for Education asked the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (The Panel) to deliver a single, national, independent review of the circumstances leading to Arthur's death. On behalf of the Government, he has also commissioned a Joint Targeted Area Inspection to examine how all the relevant local agencies are working together to protect and safeguard children in the Solihull area. Together, the National Review and the Joint Targeted Area Inspection will help to make sure that lessons are learned and changes made to strengthen work to safeguard children both in Solihull and across the country.

As set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#), if children are to receive the right help at the right time, local safeguarding partners, together with other appropriate senior leaders of local organisations and agencies, must promote inter-agency co-operation to improve the welfare of all children. Working Together is also clear that agencies need to collectively manage risk and have agreed arrangements for their thresholds. As has been highlighted by recent cases, it is particularly important to assure yourselves on your collective ability to accurately identify concerns, share information and take prompt action, where required, to safeguard children.

If local agencies deem it appropriate to trigger the Public Law Outline (PLO) procedure and are considering taking a case to court, it is of course also important to follow the [Best Practice Guidance](#) for pre-proceedings issued by the President of the Family Division in March this year.

Working Together also outlines requirements regarding timeliness of Local

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. We note that there is a large number of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews falling outside of the expectation that they are published within six months of initiation. In addition to the Panel, the Secretary of State for Education must be notified when any such delay occurs, and we expect all safeguarding partnerships to actively monitor their compliance with this duty. The attached communication from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel sets out the timescales expected.

We therefore look to you as the local statutory safeguarding leaders for your area to ensure there are effective multi-agency arrangements in place that are meeting statutory duties; robustly led and visibly promoted at a local level; and supporting social workers, health professionals, police officers and other frontline practitioners to do the difficult and important work they do every day.

In order that organisations, agencies and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that everyone working with children and families understands the role they should play and the role of other practitioners. They should be aware of, and comply with, the published arrangements set out by you as the local safeguarding partners.

We know that such tragic cases can be deeply affecting, particularly for those teams directly involved in the response. We are therefore very mindful of your and your staff's wellbeing and know you will be taking every opportunity to support each other and your teams through this difficult time. We thank you again for all that you do to protect and safeguard children every single day both during the pandemic and beyond.


Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Keegan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

GILLIAN KEEGAN MP
Minister of State for Care & Mental Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Maclean', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rachel Maclean MP
Minister for Safeguarding

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Quince". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end of the second name.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families