**SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT**

**HANDOUT – March 2017**

**Practice Reviews**

# Introduction

This handout sets out some of the main points in the guidance on Child Practice Reviews and Adult Practice Reviews from Working Together to Safeguard People volume 2 and volume 3 respectively.

The guidance strengthens reviews compared with the previous 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,
* it strengthens the accountability of managers to take responsibility for the context and culture in which their staff are working
* it recognises the impact of the tragic circumstances of non-accidental deaths or serious harm, and provides opportunities for serious incidents to be reviewed in a culture that is fair and just
* it takes a more streamlined, flexible and proportionate approach to reviewing and learning from what are inevitably complex cases
* it allows a more constructive and appropriate use of resources than in the previous system and works to shorter timescales
* it draws on learning from other related review processes and joins these up
* it focuses on learning and on action to improve future practice.

The guidance sets out:

* Principles for the new arrangements
* A learning and reviewing framework of multi-agency professional forums, concise reviews and extended reviews
* Implications for Safeguarding Boards – in terms of responsibility and structure
* Detail about multi-agency professional forums
* Detail about reviews.

# Principles

Principles include:

* Support for professionals to protect people
* Fair and just approaches to learning
* Transparency
* Engagement of individuals and families
* Accountability
* Effectiveness through action and audit.

# Learning and Reviewing Framework

Safeguarding Boards have a structure that supports regular multia professional forums and practice reviews when needed. A potential safeguarding board infrastructure of sub-groups supporting the learning and reviewing framework is suggested in the guidance, as illustrated below.



Forums should be a continuous programme of active learning by each Board and are an integral part of the Board’s Business Plan. The forums have two main purposes:

1. Case learning: facilitated discussion, consultation and reflection by practitioners, managers or core groups, using a systems approach to examining and analysing individual current or no longer active cases. These may include complex cases where there have been good outcomes, current cases that have become stuck, or cases which cause professional concern or interest that do not meet the criteria for concise or extended adult practice reviews.
2. Dissemination of new knowledge and findings: from multi-agency audits and from practice reviews, inspections or other local or national sources, in order to ensure continuing local multi-professional learning and development.

Learning from forums should be disseminated as appropriate locally and nationally.

Criteria, process and templates for practice Reviews are set out in the guidance. Reviews will normally take no more than six months and an action plan must be signed off by member agencies of the Boards within four weeks of the final report (this is similar for child practice reviews). A flowchart of adult and child practice review processes is given in the guidance.

The Board may decide that a review is required in relation to a case involving historic or contemporary organised or multiple abuse. The aim of such a review would be to examine what can be learned from practice to ensure that current practice and organisational systems are strengthened and improved. Historic reviews that meet the criteria for a practice review should follow the principles, approach and process in the guidance.