

To: Directors of Children's Services
LSCB Chairs

Cc: Lead Members
Chief Executives

10 February 2011

Dear colleague,

CHILD PROTECTION INFORMATION GATHERING ARRANGEMENTS

I am writing further to my letter of 28 September 2010 to update you on arrangements for gathering information on serious child care incidents and Serious Case Reviews (SCRs).

As I explained in my September letter, Departmental officials routinely notify Ministers of significant developments in relation to serious child care incidents so that they can form a view on how well child protection arrangements are working across the country. To achieve this, we depend on the information which colleagues in local authorities and Local Safeguarding Children Boards are able to provide about the progress of individual cases.

Colleagues in local authorities and LSCBs have been providing this information to the Government Office Children and Learners Teams, who in turn have liaised with Departmental officials here. My September letter explained how these arrangements are changing following the decision to close the Government Office network by 31 March 2011. London local authorities and LSCBs began providing information on serious incidents directly to officials in the Department from 1 October 2010. I can now confirm that we intend to extend this arrangement to the rest of England with effect from **Monday 21 February 2011**.

Accordingly, from Monday 21 February 2011 we would be grateful if you could start sending information about serious incidents and SCRs to the Department's team here in Safeguarding Group rather than to Government Offices. In order to keep Ministers appropriately briefed, we will want to be kept informed of:

- new child care incidents notified to Ofsted as being serious enough potentially to lead to SCRs and other cases which are receiving significant media attention;
- decisions to initiate SCRs and information on planned completion dates and plans for publishing executive summaries and (for SCRs initiated on or after 10 June 2010) overview reports; and
- where known, expected dates of court proceedings related to child protection incidents and the outcome of court cases including verdicts and sentencing.


The Department's team may also seek information from you on an ad hoc basis - just as the GOs have done until now - in connection with individual serious incidents and specific queries from Ministers.

We are of course committed to reducing bureaucratic burdens on local authorities. It will be important that we strike the right balance between ensuring that Ministers have the information they need and making the process work as simply and efficiently as possible. Colleagues in London local authorities and LSCBs have responded helpfully to the new arrangements, which have been working well, and we are grateful for their co-operation. We will draw on the experience of working with London colleagues when establishing arrangements with your staff. We will also continue to keep the arrangements under review and will be pleased to receive feedback at any point.

Members of the team here will be in touch with your staff soon to discuss working arrangements. In the meantime it would be helpful if you could use the following email address to alert the Department to developments on new and ongoing incidents:
Mailbox.CPOD@education.gsi.gov.uk

If you have any queries about the contents of this note, please contact Anne Gair in our Child Safeguarding Division (anne.gair@education.gsi.gov.uk) in the first instance.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanette Pugh". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

JEANETTE PUGH
DIRECTOR, SAFEGUARDING GROUP