



Edinburgh Public Protection Committees

Joint Protocol for Conducting Learning Reviews in Adult Protection and Child Protection

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3	Sept 2025	APC and CPC Chairs and LOs	ECPC/APC Sept 2025
Review Date	Sept 2027		

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Introduction

Purpose of the protocol

This protocol provides the framework to allow a consistent, systematic and transparent approach to the process of Learning Reviews in Edinburgh for child or adult protection. It is informed by the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#) and the [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#).

The **Child Protection Committee** is an inter-agency strategic group, which oversees and evaluates child protection policy and practice in Edinburgh. The Committee provides individual and collective leadership and direction for the management of child protection services across the statutory and voluntary sectors, with a key focus on continuous improvement and learning culture.

The **Adult Protection Committee** is a multi-agency body established under the terms of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 to ensure a coordinated approach to the protection of adults at risk of harm in Edinburgh. The Committee's aims include promoting the highest standards of inter-agency practice and cooperation in the protection of adults.

Together Edinburgh's Child and Adult Protection Committees are responsible for the development, performance and improvement of multi-agency public protection activity within the city. The committees both report directly to the Edinburgh Chief Officers' Group – Public Protection.

Where cases have relevance to the work of other public protection committees – Offender Management Committee, Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee, Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership – representation and involvement of these Committees will be considered throughout. Where appropriate, identified learning may be shared within wider strategic forums, for example the Children's Partnership or the Corporate Parenting Board.

What is a Learning Review?

A key feature of Learning Reviews is that they are not investigations.

Learning Reviews

- I. Offer collective learning and inclusive staff engagement - A Learning Review should be multi-agency; bringing practitioners together with the Review Team in a structured process in order to reflect, increase understanding and identify key learning.
- II. Support for staff is critical and should be integral to the review process in order that they can participate fully in the process, reflect on their practice, share their knowledge and contribute to the emerging learning.
- III. Take a systems approach - The Learning Review does not stop at the points when shortcomings in professional practice have been recognised, it moves on to explore the interaction of the individual with the wider context, including cultural and organisational barriers, in order to understand why things developed in the way they did. The focus is on:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. How assessments were made?
 - c. Understanding how people saw things at the time; what knowledge was drawn on to make sense of a situation; the resources available and the emotional impact of the work.
 - d. Effective practice.
 - e. Identification of learning points and how they will be actioned and implemented in future practice and systems.
- IV. Ensure proportionality and flexibility - The situations under review will inevitably be complex and diverse and require a streamlined, proportionate and flexible approach to ensure effective learning.
- V. Manage timing and timelines - Long review processes should be avoided. Optimum learning is achieved when it is relevant for current practice and implemented efficiently.

Sometimes individual practice or performance issues may be identified during the review process and there are mechanisms in place for addressing this sensitively with the relevant organisation. These become a matter for the relevant employer to progress as the Learning Review process is **never** about finding blame or culpability.

Underpinning Principles and Values

Learning Reviews are underpinned by the following core principles and values:

- They promote a culture that supports learning;
- Their emphasis is on learning and organisational accountability and not on culpability;
- They recognise that a positive shared learning culture is an essential requirement for achieving effective multi-agency practice;
- They are objective and transparent;
- They ensure that staff are engaged and involved in the process and supported throughout the Review;

- They recognise the complexities and difficulties in the work to protect individuals and to support families and wider informal networks;
- They produce learning which can be disseminated effectively, so it directly impacts on and positively influences professional practice and organisational systems;
- They are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of those under review and their families especially any children and young people.

Criteria for Undertaking a Learning Review

For adults:

An Adult Protection Committee will undertake a Learning Review in the following circumstances:

1. Where the adult is, or was, subject to adult support and protection processes and the incident or accumulation of incidents gives rise for reasonable cause for concern about how professionals and services worked together to protect the adult from harm, **and** one or more of the following apply:

(i) The adult at risk of harm dies and

- harm or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the adult's death;
- the death is by suicide or accidental death;
- the death is by alleged murder, culpable homicide, reckless conduct, or act of violence.

or

(ii) The adult at risk of harm has not died but is believed to have experienced serious abuse or neglect

2. Where the adult who died or sustained serious harm was not subject to adult support and protection processes

(i) When the findings of an inquiry or review by another organisation or court proceedings, or a referral from another organisation gives rise to reasonable cause for concern about lack of involvement in relation to the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

or

(ii) The Adult Protection Committee determines there may be learning to be gained through conducting a Learning Review.

Source: [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#).

For children:

A Child Protection Committee will undertake a Learning Review in the following circumstances:

When a child has sustained significant harm or risk of significant harm as defined in the [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021\(updated 2023\)](#) **and** there is additional learning to be gained from a Review being held that may inform improvements in the protection of children and young people

and one or more of the following apply:

- **abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor** in the child's sustaining of or risk of significant harm
- **the child is on, or has been on, the Child Protection Register (CPR) or a sibling is or was on the CPR or was a care experienced child** (i.e. looked after, or receiving aftercare or continuing care from the local authority). This is regardless of whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the sustaining of significant harm, unless it is absolutely clear to the Child Protection Committee that the child having been on the CPR or being care experienced has no bearing on the case
- the child's sustaining of or risk of significant harm is caused by attempted **suicide, alleged attempted murder, reckless conduct, or act of violence**
- the child is being managed under **Care and Risk Management (CaRM) processes** and causes harm to another person or themselves.

When a child has died and there is additional learning to be gained from a Review being held that may inform improvements in the protection of children and young people

and one or more of the following apply:

- **abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor** in the child's death or the sustaining of or risk of significant harm
- **the child is on, or has been on, the Child Protection Register (CPR) or a sibling is or was on the CPR or was a care experienced child** (i.e. looked after, or receiving aftercare or continuing care from the local authority). This is regardless of whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the child's death, unless it is absolutely clear to the Child Protection Committee that the child having been on the CPR or being care experienced has no bearing on the case
- the child is being managed under **Care and Risk Management (CaRM) processes**
- the child's death is by **suicide, alleged murder, suspected culpable homicide, reckless conduct, or act of violence.**

Learning Reviews may also be undertaken where effective working has taken place and outstanding positive learning can be gained to improve practice in promoting the protection of children and young people.

The criteria does not preclude a CPC reviewing the death of a child pre-birth.

Definitions

A child is defined as a person under 18 years of age. An adult is anyone over 18 years of age.

Situations may arise for Learning Reviews, particularly for 16-and 17-year-old people, where there are legitimate interests and engagement from services for both children and adults. In such circumstances there should be discussions between the Child and Adult Protection Committees to determine which is the most appropriate to lead on a Learning Review, with agreement reached as to how each of the committees will be involved and updated on progress of the Review. This will require consideration on a case-by-case basis.

For those aged 18-26 who are/were care experienced or in receipt of throughcare, aftercare or continuing care at the time of the incident(s) that triggered a Learning Review, the Review would ordinarily fall under the remit of the Child Protection Committee. There may be exceptions where the circumstances of the case are agreed by the relevant Chairs to be more appropriately considered by the Adult Protection Committee.

Parallel Processes

There can be a number of possible routes into the consideration of a Learning Review.

Alongside a Learning Review, there may be parallel processes to consider e.g. Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI); live criminal investigations or proceedings; Mental Welfare Commission Review; Health and Safety Executive Investigations. These might already be underway or have developed contemporaneously with the Learning Review process. Where they pre-date the Learning Review, such processes might even generate the notification for a Learning Review.

The processes outlined above have distinct purposes. No process is inherently more important and expected to automatically take precedence. However, where there are ongoing criminal proceedings or FAI, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) may include conditions that impact on whether a Learning Review can start or end. There should be ongoing dialogue with Police Scotland, COPFS, Scottish Children's Reporter's Administration and any other relevant party to determine how a Learning Review can proceed in certain cases. Issues to be considered include how to:

- Link processes.
- Avoid witness contamination.
- Avoid duplicate information being collected.
- Recommend whether to postpone a Learning Review until a parallel process has concluded.

Where a case is subject to police investigations or court proceedings, these should not inhibit the setting up of a Learning Review nor delay immediate remedial action to improve services. It is important that the purpose of the review process, which is to support professional and organisational learning and to promote improvement in inter-agency practice, is understood and remains the focus.

The COPFS and Police Scotland have a protocol which recognises that criminal proceedings can be managed simultaneously (see Annex 2 of the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews 2021](#)). This national protocol was agreed by COPFS, Police Scotland and Child Protection Committees Scotland to provide a framework for sharing appropriate information generated through both processes wherever possible. It is informed by local Data Sharing Agreements for child protection.

Work is ongoing at a national level to have a similar protocol agreed for adult protection cases. In the meantime, the principles within the Annex 2 protocol described above are a useful reference point for those undertaking adult protection Learning Reviews. Early engagement with COPFS and Police Scotland should take place to agree the basis on which any Learning Review might proceed.

National Hub for Reviewing and Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People

The National Hub for Reviewing and Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People ensures that the death of every child in Scotland is subject to a quality review and that there is a consistent approach and coordinated process for all local review activity that is undertaken in relation to learning from the circumstances surrounding the deaths of all children and young people in Scotland. This includes care experienced young people up to the age of 26 year.

The [National Hub for Reviewing and Learning from the Deaths of Children and Young People: National guidance when a child or young person dies](#) (Health Improvement Scotland and Care Inspectorate 2021) sets out the implementation process for health boards, and local authority areas when responding to, and reviewing the death of a child or young person (Appendix 2 provides additional information about the National Hub process). Engagement must take place early in the process with any other organisation involved in the child or young person's care, working together to reach a decision about the most suitable review process. All organisations and agencies involved should work together to undertake one single review wherever this is possible and appropriate.

Work is ongoing at a local level to ensure effective Child Death reviewing processes and how these interact with Learning Reviews, alongside other review types.

Learning Review – Decision Making Process

Learning Review Notification

Any member of the Adult Protection Committee; Child Protection Committee; another Public Protection Committee in Edinburgh; or a local agency or practitioner can raise a concern about a case where they believe there are further opportunities for organisational learning.

These matters should always be discussed with a line manager in the first instance, to ensure there is risk management and support in place, where relevant, and agree next steps on a single-agency and multi-agency basis, as required.

Further information on Learning Reviews and the appropriate paperwork can be found on the [Learning Reviews webpage](#) for anyone to access.

Concerns are raised by completing a Learning Review Notification Form (available on the [Learning Reviews webpage](#)). There are separate forms for Adult and Child Learning Reviews, which reflect the criteria for a Learning Review set out on pp.6-7. Please remember that any care experienced young person 18 – 26 should also be referred as a Child Learning Review in the first instance.

Learning Review Notifications should be sent via email to:
public.protection@edinburgh.gov.uk.

On receipt of a notification the Public Protection Business Support will:

- acknowledge receipt,
- alert the Chair of the appropriate Learning Review Panel,
- alert the appropriate Lead Officer
- log the Notification on the Learning Review tracker.

The Lead Officer will liaise with the Chair of the Learning Review Panel to agree what further information is required and the services who will be contacted. This should take place within 2 working days of receipt of the Learning Review Notification.

Public Protection Business Support will send out a request for Learning Review Basic Information, which provides a clear request on the subject(s), nature and extent of further information that is to be supplied by relevant services. Services or agencies may also be asked to send a single-agency chronology, if they have one available. This information should be returned within 14 calendar days of the request.

The purpose of information gathering is to aid the Learning Review Panel in making a recommendation to Chief Officers about whether or not to proceed with a Learning Review. This is with reference to the criteria as specified on pp.6-7 and therefore the data gathered should be only enough to make that recommendation. It will include a brief account of agency involvement prior to the event which triggered the notification and some very initial reflection regarding practice and decision-making within that agency.

Learning Review Panel

The Adult Protection Learning Review Panel and Child Protection Learning Review Panel will be convened as required by the Committee Chairs and in conjunction with the equivalent Lead Officer, either in-person or over MS Teams.

The panels comprise of representatives from the Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership, City of Edinburgh Children's and Criminal Justice Services, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland (See Appendix 2 for details of these groups' composition). Other services can be invited on a case-by-case basis to help inform decision making. The Panels will be Chaired by the Independent Chair of either the Child Protection or Adult Protection Committee.

The meeting will be quorate if there is representation from the 3 core agencies, namely the local authority, police and health.

The purpose of the Learning Review Panel is to determine whether or not the Criteria for conducting a Learning Review has been met and, if so, whether a review should take place and what type of learning activity should be undertaken. In order to support this, the original Notifier may be invited to attend the Learning Review Panel and present the information that led to their notification. The Lead Officer may also summarise any further information arising from the Learning Review Basic Information Forms (LR1s) and/or chronologies requested.

The information will enable the Learning Review Panel to recommend:

- no further action,
- to return to the referrer or other partners for additional information
- an alternative approach to learning, or
- to progress to a full Learning Review.

A Minute of the meeting and Notification Tracker will be completed and stored by the Public Protection Business Support. The Learning Review Recommendation Form will also be completed by the Lead Officer for Adult or Child Protection so the recommendations can be shared with the Child or Adult Protection Committee and the Chief Officers' Group.

Decision-making by the Child or Adult Protection Committee

The appropriate Lead Officer will share any Learning Review recommendations from Learning Review Panel with the Adult or Child Protection Committee, the Committee's approval will be recorded in the Learning Review tracker by Public Protection Business Support.

Following the Adult or Child Protection Committee, the Lead Officer will advise the Chief Officers' Group Business Support, using the AP or CP Learning Review Recommendation Form, within 2 working days. This will be shared by the Chief Officer's Group Business Support by email and a final decision will be expected 14 calendar days from receipt.

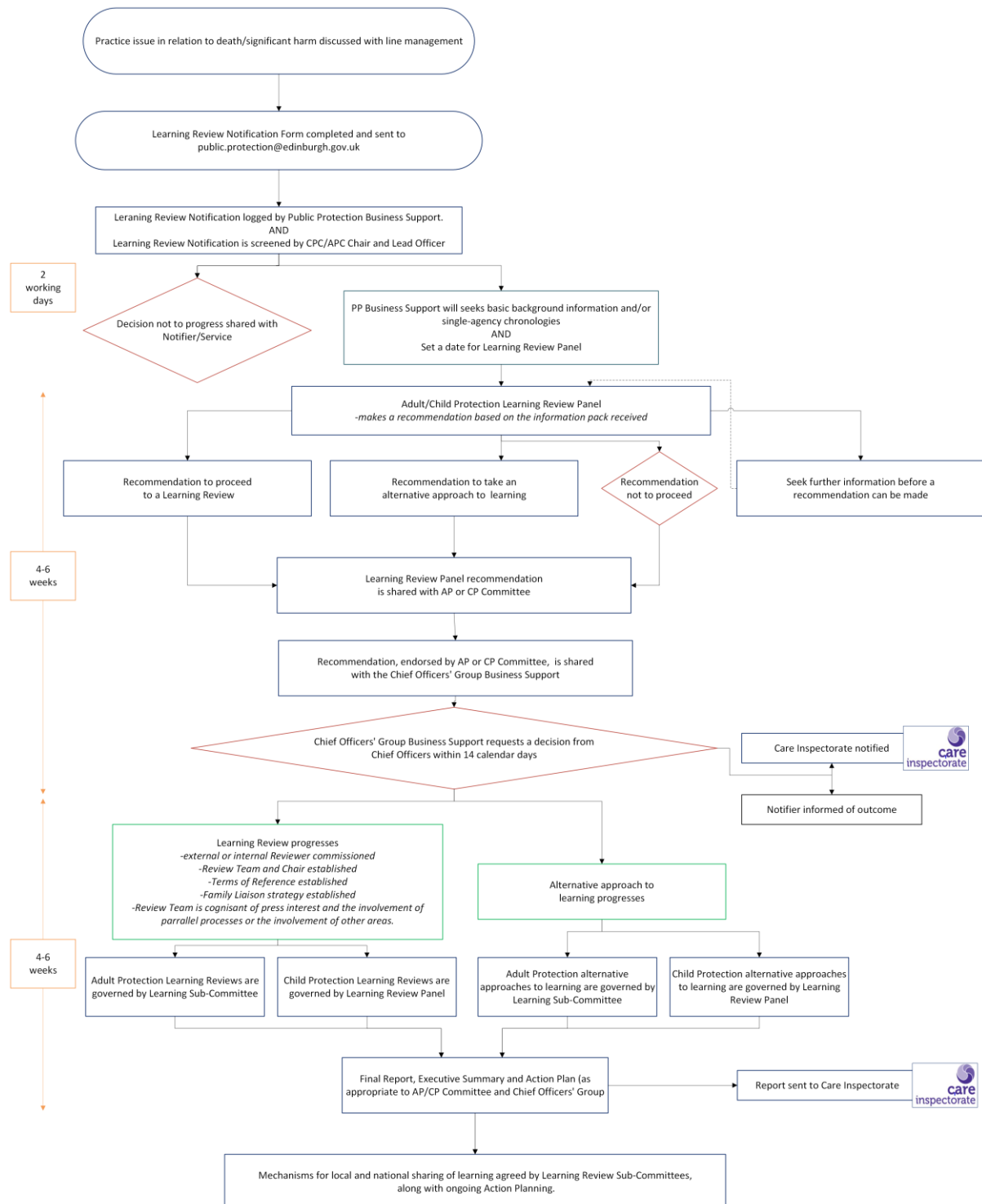
At this point, the Lead Officer to the relevant Committee will inform the Care Inspectorate of the decision using the [Care Inspectorate Learning Reviews Notification Page](#).

The Lead Officer will share the decision with the original notifier, using the Learning Review Notification Response.

Timescale for the Initial Decision-Making Process

The timescale for this initial decision-making stage will vary but every effort will be made to conclude this within 4-6 weeks from the receipt of the initial notification. Please see the Figure 1 on page 12 for further detail

Learning Review Process Flowchart



Potential Media Interest

Potential media interest should be borne in mind from the earliest stages of consideration at the Learning Review Panel and be discussed by the relevant Committee and COG. If a case is likely to attract high public and media interest, a strategy should be prepared. Media statements should make it clear that the purpose of the review is learning and not culpability.

If there is likely to be high levels of media attention, the Committee and COG will consider the impact on the staff and family involved in the review, advising and supporting them as much as possible. This will include identifying a spokesperson and those likely to be approached by the media for statements.

All key local and national partners, particularly the Scottish Government, will be informed that media enquiries are anticipated in child protection cases (child_protection@gov.scot). This includes situations when the decision is not to proceed with a Learning Review.

Specific Scenarios

The process where more than one Local Authority Area are involved

- Chairs of each involved local area will meet and agree a mechanism for joint working, including which area should take the lead and, if required, joint commissioning of the Reviewer and agreement on members of the Review Team.
- Clear channels for information sharing should be identified.
- Any disputed matters should be escalated to the relevant Chief Officers' Group (COG) for consideration.
- In the case of a potential of wider cross-border Learning Review with areas outwith Scotland, the Committee Chair should meet with the Chair of the relevant Safeguarding Partnership (England), Regional Safeguarding Board (Wales) or Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) to agree a mechanism for joint working.

More than one person

Where more than one person is involved in any Learning Review the review must consider each person's perspective and experience individually but ensure that learning is brought together in one Learning Review report.

The Learning Review and other formal staff processes

Any issues of staff malpractice or competency will be referred to and managed by the relevant employer. Learning Reviews are about multi-agency learning to improve practice. They are not investigations or a means of dealing with complaints. If issues come to light, these require to be handled carefully in order to encourage honesty, transparency and staff participation. This should be carried out by alerting the relevant employer at the earliest opportunity and ensuring that the matters are dealt with as separate to the Learning Review.

If a situation does not meet the criteria for a Learning Review

There will be some situations where it is decided that the criteria for a Learning Review have not been met. However, there may be some valuable reflective learning for practitioners and services. The Learning Review Recommendation Forms should denote the Learning Review Panel's deliberations in considering the best forms of learning, how these will be carried out and how learning will be shared, which will be considered by the Child or Adult Protection Committee.

Undertaking the Learning Review

A Systemic Approach

A Learning Review is a collective endeavour and all reviews must adopt a systemic approach. This approach goes beyond individual or professional practice to explore underlying systemic factors, the links with organisational factors and the wider contexts.

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.

A Learning Review 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.

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 had on the lived experience of the person who is the subject of the review.
- It explores how user-friendly systems are for service users, whether children or adults (including families and wider informal networks), as well as 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. The learning develops with each Review Team 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 local and national level.

The Review Team

- The Review Team manages the whole process of the review. This will be a multi-agency group whose members have a working knowledge of the relevant services involved, but, as far as possible, have no direct involvement in the situation under review.
- The size of the Review Team should be conducive to learning and joint-working. Efforts will be made to ensure consistent participation of all members throughout the Review and to keep membership changes to a minimum.
- It is the Review Team's responsibility to ensure the Learning Review remains proportionate and focussed and is conducted in accordance with the underlying principles and values set out on page 4.
- The Review Team will work together to review and assess all information available; clarify issues for further exploration and identify any gaps or deficiencies in the information.

The Review Team consists of the separate roles of:

- The Chair
- Team members
- The Lead Reviewer(s)
- The Business Support.

Specific guidance on the attributes, skills experience and knowledge is set out in [Annex 5 of the National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#).

The Role of the Chair of the Review Team

The key components of the role of the Review Team Chair are to:

- Consider whether there are ongoing parallel processes;
- Coordinate the identification and engagement of relevant partners and suitable contributors to the Learning Review;
- Coordinate the work of the Review Team;
- Ensure that a clear and realistic timetable for the review is set out and adjusted where and when needed
- Ensure timely requests are made for key documentation from involved agencies and follow up instances when that information is not provided in a timely manner
- Chair and facilitate meetings of the Review Team
- Contribute to the development of the learning emerging through the review process
- Ensure the review process has a consistent person-centred perspective throughout
- Meet with family members alongside the Lead Reviewer as appropriate
- Attend practitioner and manager events alongside the Lead Reviewer
- With an 'internal' Learning Review, i.e. where the Learning Review is to be conducted without an Independent External Lead Reviewer, the Chair can, following agreement, also be the Lead Reviewer.

The Role of the Review Team members

It is important that members of the Review Team allocate sufficient time to the review.

The main aspects of the role are to:

- Attend the meetings of the Review team;
- Contribute to the collection and collation of information throughout the review;

- Identify any gaps or deficiencies in the information available to the Learning Review and seek to remedy this;
- Act as an interface between their service or organisation and the Learning Review Team, contributing to all practical aspects of the review that are required from their service or organisation;
- Identify those professionals within their service/agency who will be part of the review
- Help participants to feel informed and supported before, during and after the review;
- Contribute to the identification of emerging themes and issues;
- Participate in the verification, interpretation, and analysis of the information;
- Assist in the drafting of the review report by critical and constructive appraisal.

The Role of the Lead Reviewer

The overarching role of the Lead Reviewer is to facilitate and manage the learning emerging throughout the review process and to take responsibility for the production of a report which brings together all of the learning into a coherent whole.

The essential elements of the Lead Reviewer's role are to:

- Work collaboratively and transparently with the Review Team Chair and members;
- Attend the meetings of the Review Team;
- Review and assess all information available to develop a full and multi-faceted understanding of the case;
- Interpret and analyse the workings and shortcomings of complex, multi-agency systems;
- Establish effective relationships with contributors to the Review;
- Effectively facilitate group work and manage complex group dynamics;
- Facilitate practitioner and manager events so that:
 - Participants understand the purpose of the Review as well as the underpinning principles and values of Learning Reviews;
 - Trust is established between participants;
 - All participants can voice their views in a safe manner;
 - Discussion, debate, probing, and constructive challenge are encouraged.
- Use a range of participatory approaches to obtain the views and experiences of individual adults, children, young people, and their families (as appropriate);
- Pull together the learning and write the report, with the assistance of the Review Team.
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to have two Lead Reviewers.
- With any Internal Learning Review, the senior manager from within the partnership appointed as Lead Reviewer can, following agreement, also be the Review Team Chair.

The Role of the Public Protection Business Support

The key aspects of the Business Support role are to:

- Administer meetings and events, including scheduling Review Team meetings, booking venues etc.
- Take minutes of Review Team meetings and practitioner and manager events
- Support the communication of the Review Team.

Enabling Factors Within the Wider Context

A supportive Chief Officers' Group is an essential enabling factor in ensuring that Learning Reviews are effective and fulfil their purpose. The Chief Officers' Group will take ownership of and have a constructive interest in the review process, findings and learning with strategic level commitment to implement the actions and learning stemming from the review.

Chief Officers will ensure that a sufficient budget is in place to resource Learning Reviews and recognise that Review Team Chair and Team members will likely need to devote multiple days to the review over and above their day-to-day work responsibilities.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (TOR) will define the scope of the Learning Review, reflecting the rationale for undertaking a review and be relevant and specific to the situation under review. The TOR will be based on the information known at the time. The proposed TOR will be drawn by the Learning Review Team up at the commencement of a Learning Review (Appendix 3 – Learning Review Example TOR). Once the review is underway the TOR may need to be amended by the Review Team. The Committee should be informed of and in agreement with any changes to the TOR. The final TOR will be included in the Learning Review Report at the completion of the Review.

Timescales for the Learning Review

For learning to be relevant it is important that the review is completed as soon as possible. Once a decision has been made by the Chief Officers' Group, the Review should be completed within 6 – 9 months.

Delays may be caused by parallel processes or issues adding to the complexity of the review. The Chair of the Review Team will report any reasons for delay to the Adult Protection Learning Review Sub-Committee or Child Protection Learning Review Panel, the respective Child or Adult Protection Committee and Chief Officers' Group.

Engaging the Subject of the Review process

Where the person who is the subject of the Review has not died, considerations as to how to involve them in the Review must be afforded and recorded in the Family Liaison Strategy (Appendix 4 – Learning Review Example Family Liaison Strategy).

Engaging the Family in the Review process

The family is integral to Learning Reviews, the Review Team must consider how to involve them in the process in a meaningful and sensitive way by developing a Family Liaison Strategy (Appendix 4 – Learning Review Example Family Liaison Strategy).

The purpose of engaging with the family is to explore their perspective and get their opinions about the practitioners and services who were involved in their lives. This will include what they found helpful or unhelpful and their suggestions for how services to children and adults could be improved. Their opinions contribute to the overall learning of the review.

Who constitutes the family group will differ from review to review but may include parents; step-parents; carers; siblings; grandparents; aunts and uncles; the child/young person/adult; other significant family members, including partners or spouses and close family friends.

- The family should be informed as soon as possible that a Learning Review is being undertaken, and the purpose of that Review should be clearly stated. Inviting them to take part in the review must be done sensitively.
- A decision must be made as to who, from the Review Team, will meet with the family and where.

- Meetings with the family should be arranged before any practitioner/manager events so that the family's views can be discussed.
- Arrangements must be made to feedback to the family the learning contained within the report and any strategies to improve practice and systems in the future. The family should also be asked how they found the process of the Review and their feedback should inform the conduct of future Learning Reviews.
- The feedback may have a number of functions for the family. It may provide validation or reassurance, but it may also cause distress or revive painful memories. In some circumstances support from professionals may be needed.

Involving Practitioners, First Line Managers and Strategic Managers

How practitioners and managers are involved in the Review will depend on the model chosen to undertake the Review.

Bringing together practitioners and first line managers in a group ensures that their voice directly contributes to the review and has two distinct purposes:

- Firstly, it enables them to describe what they did and why; to reflect on and analyse assessments and decision-making at the time and to identify what could have been done differently but also, what prevented them from doing this. It also enables the group to recognise effective practice and what worked well and why.
- Secondly, it generates immediate learning, at both an individual and at a group level that can be taken back into practice.

For strategic managers, meeting as a group is an opportunity to understand the learning from a particular situation in order to consider the implications from both a single agency and a multiagency perspective.

Review Team Meetings

Regular meetings of the Review Team should be scheduled throughout the course of the Learning Review. The overall purpose of these meetings is to help progress the Review, identify the emerging learning, highlight issues and questions for further exploration, set out the next steps and allocate tasks.

The focus of each Review Team meeting will differ depending on the stage of the Review. For instance, in the early stages collating information, identifying any significant gaps in that information, and clarifying which practitioners and managers should be involved in the Review and how they will be supported to participate effectively will be on the agenda. As the Review progresses the Review Team meetings will consider the learning emerging from contact with family members and from the practitioner and manager events. In the latter stages of the Learning Review the focus will be on the construction of the report.

All information processed by the Review Team must be kept secure, particularly given its sensitivity, and should be relevant to and necessary for the Review, rather than excessive. The final report will be retained for one hundred years, in accordance with information governance and compliance arrangements.

The Learning Review Report

The Learning Review report will identify key learning points. It should be clear, succinct, and as anonymous as possible.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Reviewer to pull together the learning and draft the report. This will be done alongside the Review Team whose role is to scrutinise, challenge appropriately and ensure that the report represents all the learning that has been generated by the Review process.

The report content should cover:

- A brief description of how the review was conducted;
- A brief outline of the circumstances that led to the Learning Review;
- The practice and organisational learning that has been identified and the evidence substantiating this learning;
- Examples of effective practice in the situation under review and the reason why it was effective
- Suggested strategies for improving practice and systems. It must be noted that in some situations the Review Team may conclude that practice and processes have not failed or been inappropriate and no changes are required.

Suggested strategies for improving practice and systems should be CLEAR¹. This means that:

- **The Case for change:** issues that give rise to the need for change should be identified and the likely consequences should no change occur.
- **Learning orientated:** any suggested strategies should highlight key lessons for practice identified by the review process and should promote learning.
- **Evidence based:** proposed strategies for improving systems and practice should draw on evidence of any shortcomings in policy or practice revealed by the Review and only be made if evidence exists that their implementation will effectively address the shortcomings identified in the Review report.
- **Assign responsibility:** each strategy should identify the discipline or organisation with responsibility for implementation, recognising that some will require a collaborative response.
- **Review:** any strategies recommended by the review report should be amenable to review.

The Learning Review report will be presented to the Adult Protection or Child Protection Committee and thereafter the Chief Officers' Group by the Chair of the Review Team and/or the Lead Reviewer (as appropriate) for consideration and sign off.

During this stage, the Review Team will also be working on a draft Action Plan to accompany the report's learning points and suggested strategies for improvement.

¹ Buckley H, O'Nolan C (2014) *Child Death Reviews: Developing CLEAR Recommendations* in Child Abuse Review Vol 23

Publishing the Report

The Adult or Child Protection Committee Chair will make a recommendation to the Chief Officers' Group (COG) as to whether or not to publish the report. COG will decide if and when to publish the report. Where a decision not to publish the report is taken, the exceptional circumstances underpinning that decision will be noted in the minutes of the Chief Officers' Group meeting. If a report is not published, then the learning should be extracted from the report and published separately.

All Learning Review reports are submitted separately to the Care Inspectorate and the findings incorporated into publications which summarise national learning. No local area is identifiable from these publications.

The final report and all associated documentation remains the property of the relevant Committee and any decisions to share this information further are a matter for the Committee's consideration.

On the Conclusion of a Learning Review

The dissemination and implementation of learning from a Learning Review has several components which are:

- The implementation of suggested strategies, specified in the report, for improving practice and systems
- Dissemination of learning at a local level
- Dissemination of learning at a national level

Implementation of Suggested Strategies

The report will often contain suggested strategies for improving practice and systems. The Learning Review Team will take initial responsibility for drawing up a succinct action plan to support the implementation of these strategies and sharing this with the Edinburgh APC/CPC and Chief Officers' Group. The action plan will clarify who will do what and within what timescale.

The Chief Officers' Group will consider the Action Plan, as well as any resource issues that are relevant for the production and progress of the Action Plan.

Progress will be reported to Chief Officers on a quarterly basis.

Dissemination of Learning at a Local Level

The purpose of dissemination at a local level is twofold:

- i. Firstly, to clarify what the learning is and what led to that learning so that it is understood by practitioners, managers and organisations
- ii. Secondly, to explore how that learning can be embedded in practice and systems. There are a number of approaches and models that can be used to disseminate learning at a local level. The relevant Committee will discuss and agree an approach.

- iii. To recognise and reinforce that input from practitioners and managers is valuable to informing change and improving our single-agency and multi-agency processes.

Dissemination of Learning at a National Level

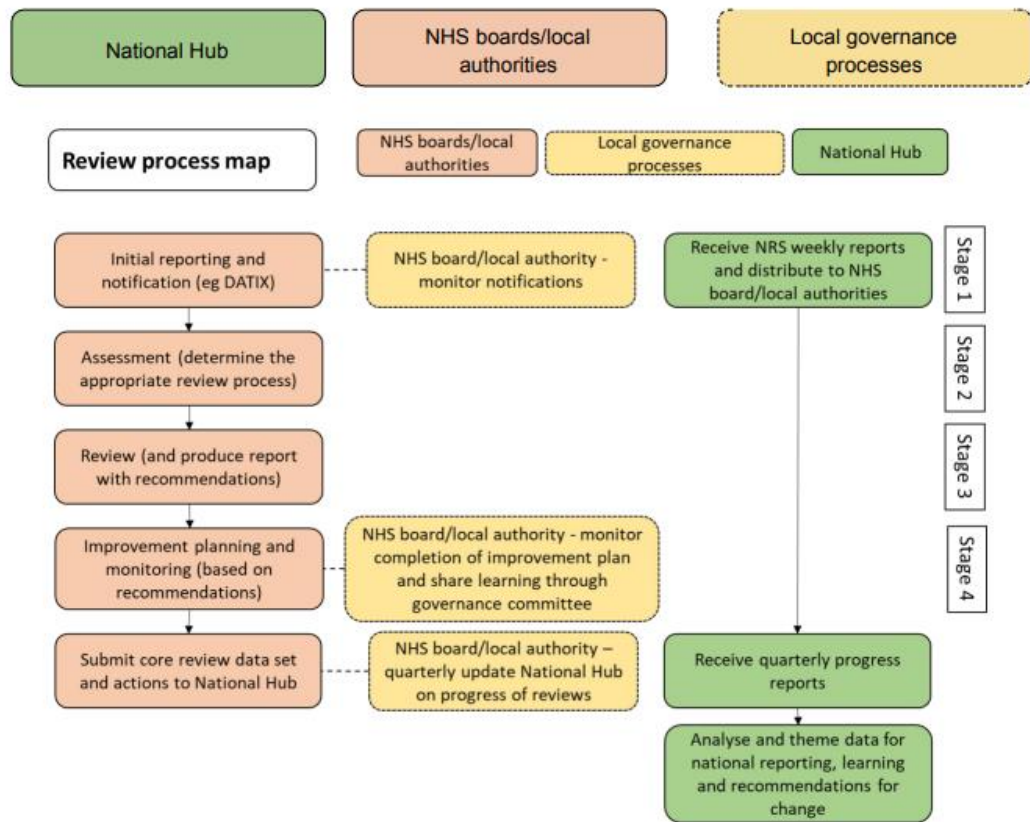
Dissemination of learning at a national level is facilitated by the publication of annual overview reports by the Care Inspectorate and by regular meetings of the National Child Protection/Adult Protection Learning Review Group. This group, comprising representatives from the Scottish Government, the Care Inspectorate, the National Adult Protection Committee Convenors' Group and Child Protection Committees Scotland, has been established to provide a forum to discuss thematic findings from child protection Learning Reviews that have national implications for policy and practice development.

Dissemination of learning at a national level can also be facilitated by the online Learning Review Knowledge Hub. This online forum enables members to participate, contribute and share information, knowledge and best practice relating to the Learning Review process, practice and learning. Membership of the Learning Review Knowledge Hub is restricted to those who have a specific role, remit and focus on case review processes, research, policy and learning.

Appendix 1 – Learning Review Panel Membership

Agency	Key Invitees
City of Edinburgh Council	<p>Chief Social Work Officer</p> <p>For child protection: Service Director – Children’s and Criminal Justice Services Senior Manager, Children's Practice Teams & Review Team Head of Service for Education, where required</p> <p>For adult protection: Principle Social Worker Health & Social Care Partnership</p>
NHS Lothian	<p>Director of Public Protection Clinical Nurse Manager, Public Protection Team Lead Nurse, Public Protection Team</p> <p>For child protection: Lead Paediatrician for Child Protection in Edinburgh, Department of Community Child Health</p>
Police Scotland	<p>Detective Chief Inspector, Edinburgh Public Protection Unit</p> <p>For child protection: Detective Inspector with responsibility for child protection, Edinburgh PPU</p> <p>For adult protection: Detective Inspector with responsibility for adult protection, Edinburgh PPU</p>
Committees	<p>For adult protection: Chair of the Adult Protection Committee Lead Officer for Adult Protection Lead Officer for Equally Safe, as required</p> <p>For child protection: Chair of the Child Protection Committee Lead Officer Child Protection Lead Officer for Equally Safe, as required</p>

Appendix 2 - National Child Death Review and Learning Hub Process Map



Appendix 3 – Learning Review Example Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Edinburgh Public Protection Committees

Learning Review Name

1 - Criteria for undertaking a Learning Review

The Public Protection Committees will undertake a Learning Review in line with in the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#) and the [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#).

2 - Decision to undertake a Learning Review –X

The initial recommendation of the Edinburgh APC/CPC was that a Learning Review was required was made on X. Chief Officers endorsed this recommendation on X.

3 - Purpose of the Learning Review

The purpose of the Learning Review is to inform both practical and systemic improvements to the protection of children and young people in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh APC/CPC acknowledges that reflecting on learning enables agencies to identify good practice in protecting children, and to ensure that any necessary practice changes are made, to better protect children in the future.

Of particular importance to the Learning Review is to:

- Focus on the effectiveness of partnership working.
- Identify areas of strength in single or multi-agency practice.
- Examine levels of protection for children at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation in Edinburgh.
- Consider the impact of risk management in complex cases.
- Consider the use of available resources, protocols, and guidance to protect children and young people in Edinburgh.
- Establish whether a different approach to single and multi-agency working could have improved outcomes, sustained change, or reduced the presenting high-risk behaviours for the child concerned.
- Learn together across all areas for improvement or change in single or multi-agency practice.
- Identify suggested Strategies for Improvement.

4 - Methodology

The Review will be conducted in line with the expectations of the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#) and the [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#).

A Learning Review will be conducted and will apply a systems approach that includes case file reading, a practitioner and manager event and a senior managers event. It will follow the procedures as set out in the guidance and ensure the Care Inspectorate are informed at the start and end of the Learning Review. Parallel processes will be considered. The Reviewer will, where possible, have unrestricted access to policies, protocols, procedures, case records related to Child XXX.

Any significant risks/needs identified by the Reviewer during the Review process will be reported immediately to the relevant Chief Officer from the agency concerned.

Administrative support for the Reviewer will be provided on behalf of the Edinburgh APC/CPC.

The new [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\) - Updated 2023](#) will support the Learning Review in its child protection considerations. Relevant Research will also be included.

5 - Time period to be covered

The period to be covered by the Review will be from XXX to XXX.

6 - Specific Issues to be considered within the Review

The aim of the Learning Review is to examine the multi-agency response to a child subject to harm, abuse and neglect. To include a focus on the effectiveness of partnership working, risk assessment, understanding of the type of harm presented.

7 - Parallel or other processes

Incidents relating to this Review were reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). The Review Team have liaised directly with COPFS, and XXXXXXXX

8 - Ethnicity, Religion, Diversity, Gender, Disability, Language & Equalities

The Learning Review will take account of any learning in respect of ethnicity, religion, diversity, gender, disability, language, and equalities.

9 - Reporting Arrangements

The Reviewer and Review Team will take a proportionate, flexible, and timely approach to ensure that a report of the learning is relevant to the current practice context, systematic in approach and moves beyond any shortcomings by seeking to understand why events took place, with a strengthened focus on how learning can be actioned and implemented.

No individual staff member will be identified in the report, and services identified in their widest sense wherever possible. Redaction prior to circulation may be necessary and will follow the suggested format contained in the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#) and the [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#).

The Reviewer and the Chair of the Review Team will present the Learning Review report to XXX CPC and Chief Officers for consideration and sign off.

10 - The Review Team

Independent Reviewer: XXX

Review Chair: XXXX

Review Team	Agency	Name
Professional representative		
Professional representative		
Professional representative		
Professional representative		
Professional representative		
<i>Professional Consultant</i>		
<i>Professional Consultant</i>		

The Review Team will be supported by XXX Child Protection Committee's Lead Officer and administrative support.

The Review Team will act as single points of contact for any information required and to assist in setting up any conversations / meetings related to their service / agency and report back progress / information to the Review Team.

Chief Officers from all partner agencies expect that all relevant services will assist the Learning Review process. Any difficulties will be addressed by the Reviewer with the relevant Chief Officer of the agency concerned.

11 - Staff Welfare

Full consideration will be given to staff welfare and support throughout the Learning Review, particularly for those who had direct involvement in the case and may be involved in the staff engagement sessions, or who may be invited to take part in individual conversations as part of the Learning Review process. It will be the responsibility of each service / agency to support this. Staff will be advised of contacts for support as required. Updates to those who took part and broader staff groups will be agreed by the Review Team and the Edinburgh APC/CPC.

12 - Timescale for the Learning Review

As suggested in the [National Guidance for Child Protection Committee Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2021, updated 2024\)](#) and the [National Guidance for Adult Protection Committees Undertaking Learning Reviews \(2022\)](#). The process is anticipated to be completed within nine months of the first meeting on the Review Team.

Review start date: XXX

Appendix 4 – Learning Review Example Family Liaison Strategy

Edinburgh Public Protection Learning Review - Family Liaison Strategy

Name of Learning Review

The following Family Liaison Strategy ensures that subjects of Learning Reviews, their families and wider informal networks, where appropriate, are included in any Learning Review process that is being undertaken by Edinburgh Adult Protection Committee or Edinburgh Child Protection Committee.

The strategy includes:

- Identification of staff members who work in the Edinburgh APC/CPC area and who are responsible for informing the family of the Learning Review, this may be the appointed Reviewer, however it may be another professional who is already involved with the child or family and is the most appropriate person.
- Identifying who the family is and who should be invited to contribute their views, could include parents, extended family members and the child or young person. The decision rests with Edinburgh APC/CPC.
- Edinburgh APC/CPC will consider the dynamics of family structures to ensure that the appropriate family members are contacted. This is particularly important in situations where families may be split in some way and their involvement is deemed appropriate.
- Informing the child / family that a Learning Review is to be undertaken will include explaining the purpose of the Review, the process of the Review and the request to have their views considered by the Reviewer and the Learning Review Team when their involvement is agreed.
- Consideration of any cultural or lifestyle considerations, religious beliefs, or any communication requirements in terms of language or disability
- Consideration of sensitivities due to experience of trauma and loss, and significant abuse that an adult/child may have experienced or where the adult/child may no longer be in the care of their family is essential.
- The planning for meeting any child or family member with the designated Family Liaison professional should be arranged for a mutually convenient time and venue.
- Edinburgh APC/CPC assure family anonymity in the final report.
- On completion of the Learning Review, the child / family will be informed of the findings and any suggested strategies for improvement.
- The child / family must be informed of any delays in the process.

Learning Review Information (CONFIDENTIAL)

Child / Adults Name	
LR Reference Number	
Case identifier (where applicable)	
Learning Review Start date	
Learning Review End date	

Reviewer(s)

Name	Designation	Agency	Email Address

Consideration of Family in Learning Review

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Family Liaison Professional (s)

Name	Designation	Agency	Email Address

Family Members to be Informed/Consulted

Name	Relationship to subject of Review	Inform/ consult	Contact details

NB: XXX discussed family liaison strategy with child / Adult XXX before during visit that took place in XXX

Language/Disability/Cultural considerations

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Date(s) of contact

Date	Family Member(s)	Nature of Contact

Please sign (electronically) and date agreed: