

# Expression of interest

# Title: Final analysis of serious case reviews for the period 2017-2019

**Project reference: 20-21/025**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 12 noon on Friday 8 January 2021**

## Summary

The final analysis aims to understand and analyse the key issues, challenges and themes in practice, emerging from the final cohort of serious case reviews (SCRs) with an incident date between 01 April 2017 – 29 September 2019. The analysis will enable practitioners and agencies working singly and collectively to understand these issues. This analysis will provide valuable evidence to inform the national and local review arrangements introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It will inform the future priorities and work programme of the independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

## Background

Serious case reviews (SCR) were local statutory inquiries carried out by the then Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). SCRs were commissioned when a child died or had been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect were known or suspected, and there was cause for concern about how professionals worked together to safeguard the child.

The Department legislated in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, to replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs – the bodies with responsibility for commissioning, overseeing, and publishing SCRs) with a system of local safeguarding partners. Under the statutory guidance Working Together: transitional arrangements, published in July 2018, LSCBs were required to complete the transition to safeguarding partner arrangements during the period between 29 June 2018 and 29 September 2019. Once this transition was complete, LSCBs were no longer able to initiate SCRs. Their primary function then became to ensure completion and publication of any remaining SCRs initiated before safeguarding partner arrangements became fully operational. The statutory guidance also allowed a 12-month grace period from the date that safeguarding partners becomes operational for this to be done – the final date was 29 September 2020.

Since 1998, the Government has commissioned eight thematic reviews which drew out trends in learning from SCRs and shared that information with professionals and the sector. The previous [triennial review](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869586/TRIENNIAL_SCR_REPORT_2014_to_2017.pdf) covered the period 01 April 2014 to 31 March 2017.

The final analysis of SCRs will cover those where the incident date falls between 01 April 2017 and 29 September 2019 and we estimate this time period will cover approximately 300 SCRs. This is a significant number of serious child safeguarding cases to review and the analysis of their learning is vital for our policy development work in seeking to understand what we can do to improve support and protection for our most vulnerable children and families.

Serious incidents are a high priority for the Minister and how we learn from previous incidents is equally as important, to help minimise the risk of harm to children in the future.

## Evaluation aims

The aim of the study is to understand what have been the key issues and challenges for practitioners and agencies, taken from SCRs which have an incident date that occurred in the period 01 April 2017 – 29 September 2019.

The final analysis will provide invaluable background research for safeguarding partners and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to consider when carrying out their functions, to decide which cases merit a local or national child safeguarding practice review. We would also expect the analysis to result in better outcomes for children, young people and families by generating, collating and sharing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision makers across the children’s social care sector.

## Methodology

The methodology used for previous reviews included both quantitative and qualitative analysis of SCRs, to draw out common themes and learning and identify implications for policy makers and practitioners. We expect this review to adopt a similar methodology for the purposes of consistency and comparability.

We also are proposing to add an additional report showing the change and impact of practice over time, building on previous reviews, and which will conclude the final analysis. This report will provide insight for the local safeguarding partners and the Panel into how they can monitor implementation and impact of recommendations going forward.

**Reporting and Outputs**

We expect the outputs of the research will be:

* a published report of the main study of outstanding SCRs, including the quantitative and qualitative analysis
* a ‘user-friendly’ summary of the main study
* a report showing change and impact of practice over the time SCRs were in operation
* a series of practice briefings highlighting key issues, challenges and implications for practice for those working in children’s social care and early help, police and criminal justice, health, and education.

**Data**

The researchers will use existing source data from incident notifications to Ofsted and the Panel and published/completed SCRs. The published final analysis must be written in such a way that no individual child or adult can be identified from any example case studies or references to cases.

**Steering Group**

A project steering group will be established by DfE to provide quality assurance to the project and operationalise its findings.

## Timing

The deadline for expression of interest bids will be noon Friday 8 January 2021. We plan to issue Invitations to Tender week commencing 25 January 2021, with a deadline of noon Friday 12 February 2021. Bids will be assessed week commencing 15 February 2021, with contract being awarded to the successful bidder the week after. We expect work on the project to begin at the end of February/early March 2021 and to be delivered by 26 November 2021.

We expect the outputs to be published by 31 March 2022 (subject to agreement).

## Assessment criteria

We are looking for an individual or organisation with a strong reputation in national/international research. Please set out in the EOI your:

1. understanding of the Department’s requirements, including the need to demonstrate best value;
2. knowledge and experience of research and practice in this area, for example, child protection and child safeguarding issues, serious case reviews;
3. experience of handling highly sensitive data relating to, for example, serious incidents and SCRs, which should be handled with the strictest level of security and confidentiality;
4. experience of reviewing and thematically analysing large volumes of descriptive evidence; and
5. experience of working on high-profile Government research projects and writing good quality reports with clear evidence-based conclusions and lessons for practice.

Each of these criteria has equal weighting

Expressions of interests submitted must be **no more than 1000 words** – anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs:** **noon on Friday 8 January 2021****Send your EOI form to:** **Jan Purdy – Department for Education****Mailbox.CPOD@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expressions of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the ‘EOI form 2018’ form which can be found under attachments in the ContractsFinder listing. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the Department’s Terms & Conditions, a copy is available attached to the ContractsFinder listing. You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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