**Serious Child Safeguarding Incidents**

A local authority in England must notify the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (National Pane) within five working days if,

**it knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected**, **and**

**(a) the child dies or is seriously harmed in the local authority’s area, or**

**(b) while normally resident in the local authority’s area, the child dies or is seriously harmed outside England**

**The local authority must also notify the Secretary of State and Ofsted where a looked after child has died, whether or not abuse or neglect is known or suspected.**

*(Section 16C(1) of the Children Act 2004 (as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017) as set out in Working Together 2018)*

The first consideration in deciding whether to make a notification is whether or not the incident is serious, clarification can be found in Working Together 2018 chapter 4. Notifications must always be made if abuse or neglect is a cause of, or a contributory factor to, the serious incident, or where it is suspected. In Torbay, notification follows a multi-agency threshold meeting between the local authority, police, and designated health representative.

Serious harm includes (but is not limited to) serious and/or long-term impairment of a child’s mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. It should also cover impairment of physical health. This is not an exhaustive list. When making decisions, judgment should be exercised in cases where impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately certain. Even if a child recovers, including from a one-off incident, serious harm may still have occurred.

When deciding whether the level of harm to a child is serious, often this judgement is quite straight forward. For example, because the child has a life-changing and long-term injury or an injury that is clearly life-threatening, for example, requiring resuscitation or intensive care treatment. However, some incidents are not so straight forward and, in these circumstances, a judgement about seriousness is likely to be needed and should include consideration of cumulative harm.

**Any staff member that becomes aware of an incident meeting the above criteria should notify the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub via** [**torbay.safeguardinghub@torbay.gov.uk**](mailto:torbay.safeguardinghub@torbay.gov.uk)

**Or in the case of a Children’s Services staff member, a High Risk Briefing should be completed and provided to the Head of Service for Safeguarding and QA, who, in consultation with relevant partners and the Assistant Director, will agree whether a notification should be made.**

**In the event that the criteria is met, the Head of Service for Safeguarding will also report the event to the safeguarding partners in their area (and in other areas if appropriate) within five working days**.