

## **FACTSHEET**

From January 2024 local authorities **should** notify the Secretary of State for Education and Ofsted of the death of a care leaver aged up to their 25th birthday as per the revisions to Working Together to Safeguard Children.

### **Why should local authorities notify the death of a Care Leaver**

Notifications for care leaver deaths will allow the Department for Education to understand and learn more about what happened so we can make better informed policy decisions to prevent future deaths.

### **How should local authorities notify the death of a Care Leaver**

The notification should be made in the same way as for a Child Serious Incident Notification, via the [Child safeguarding incident notification system](#) when a care leaver is aged;

- **under 18** years of age, notifications should be made by selecting death of 'Looked after child / Care leaver child (under 18 years old)'. Please continue to select 'abuse' and/or 'neglect' or 'no abuse or neglect'. There will be an option on the 'child detail' page to identify the child as a care leaver.
- **18 years old up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday**, notifications should be made by selecting death of 'Care Leaver 18 years old up to 25th birthday'.

The information requested for the death of a care leaver is less than for a child serious incident notification.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel will receive the notification but will not review as their remit is children's serious incidents up to and including children age 17. The notification of the death of a care leaver will not itself necessitate a rapid review or local child safeguarding practice review. Ofsted will also be notified of the death of a care leaver through the notification system.

### **When to make a notification:**

1. Local authorities have a **duty** to notify where a child dies or is seriously harmed, and abuse or neglect is known or suspected. This includes children that are looked after and care leavers up to and including the age of 17 years.
2. Local authorities have a **duty** to notify the death of a looked-after child regardless of abuse or neglect being present.
3. Local authorities **should** notify the death of a care leaver for those aged up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, where it is aware of their care leaver status, regardless of abuse or neglect being present.

### **Definitions**

#### **Child**

A 'child' is anyone aged under 18.

#### **Looked after child**

A child is looked-after by a local authority if he or she falls into one of the following:

- is provided with accommodation, for a continuous period of more than 24 hours
- is subject to a care order
- is subject to a placement order

#### **Care leaver**

A care leaver is anyone aged up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday<sup>1</sup> and meets both of the following criteria:

- is no longer looked-after
- has been looked after for at least 13 weeks which began after they reached the age of 14 and ended after they reached the age of 16.

Care leavers are entitled to support from their Personal Adviser up to their 25th birthday. Local authorities are required to keep in touch with all care leavers up the point they reach age 21; and to make their best efforts to contact all care leavers aged 21 to 24 annually to remind them that they remain eligible for support.

If a young person chooses not to take up support between 21-24 years of age, we understand that the local authority might no longer be aware of a care leaver's whereabouts or circumstances (and therefore their death). This is why the requirement for a notification is not mandatory.

### **Collecting Serious Incident Notification Data**

It is important that all serious incidents that meet the criteria as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children are notified, including those for the death of a care leaver. By submitting a notification, it will ensure that relevant learning from incidents is identified and fed back into the system to prevent future harm or death.

### **Support or Guidance**

For further support or guidance please go to:

- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
  - [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel guidance for safeguarding partners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
  - [Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
  - [Extending Personal Adviser support to age 25 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
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