



# Interagency Practice Review Panel for child deaths Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

The Interagency Practice Review Panel for child deaths Procedure provides instruction and guidance for the operations of an Interagency Practice Review Panel (a Panel).

A Panel provides an interagency and inter-disciplinary approach to the review of service provision immediately following the death of a child or young person known to the child protection and family support system within a 12-month period before their death. A Panel will be guided by principles of continuous improvement and explore opportunities for systemic enhancement.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all persons involved with a Panel, including:

- all Panel members
- Panel Chairs
- a person who provides expert, administrative assistance to a Panel
- a person who receives or gathers information on behalf of a Panel.

## 3. Authority

### 3.1 Legislative context

- Section 145 [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#) (CYPS Act) - Functions of the Chief Executive
- Sections 31 [CYPS Act](#) – Reporting of suspicion that child or young person may be at risk
- Section 152(2)(a) [CYPS Act](#) – Sharing of information between certain persons and bodies
- Section 164 [CYPS Act](#) and Regulation 42 [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Regulations 2017](#) (the Regulations) - Confidentiality

### 3.2 Principles

#### 3.2.1 Child focused

The safety of children and young people is the paramount consideration of all reviews, decisions and recommendations. Agencies will acknowledge the child or young person as an individual and consider the personal and environmental factors specific to them and their family's circumstance.

#### 3.2.2 Culturally inclusive

All review processes, decisions and recommendations will acknowledge and consider the deceased child or young person's cultural identity when determining the adequacy, effectiveness and cultural responsiveness of services provided to the child or young person.



A Panel will consider including an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative as an Executive Panel member to identify culturally relevant learnings and cultural support, in addition to the Aboriginal Co-chair, when reviewing the circumstances of a deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person.

A Panel should consider including an appropriate cultural representative as an Executive Panel member to identify culturally relevant learnings for that culture when reviewing the circumstances of a deceased child or young person from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background or a new and emerging community.

### 3.2.3 Transparent and accountable

Panel reviews will be transparent and accountable in methodology, membership, and information records.

### 3.2.4 Timely and high-quality information sharing

Agencies and panel members will share information relevant to each review pursuant to section 152(2)(a) of the [CYPS Act](#). On occasion, the DCP can share information pursuant to a CE Instrument of Authorisation in accordance with section 164(4) and regulation 42(1). All agencies will put processes or delegative structures in place so information can be shared in a lawful and timely way to support review by a Panel.

### 3.2.5 Non-adversarial and objective

A Panel will use non-adversarial approaches, inquiring into the facts of a case, focussed on systems, processes, practices and interagency learning, not individual or agency performance.

Reviews will be objective and not influenced by, or protective of, agency interests or influenced by personal interests or bias.

### 3.2.6 Supports collaborative and joint learning

Agencies and panel members will collaborate with each other when planning and conducting a review to support joint learning, and reports will inform agency and system learnings.

### 3.2.7 Privacy and confidentiality

Agencies will protect the confidentiality of information in accordance with the [CYPS Act](#) and/or the Regulations and use appropriate data controls when sharing sensitive information. Information obtained during or for the purposes of a Panel must not be recorded, used or disclosed outside the Panel's official functions.

## 4. Procedure requirements

### 4.1 Notification of an adverse incident (24 hours)

DCP's Interagency Child Death Panel's Executive Officer (the Executive Officer) receives notification of a death of a child or young person. Potential sources, include:

- Births, Deaths and Marriages
- DCP Significant Incident Reporting Unit (SIRU)
- DCP Call Centre
- DCP Adverse Events Program



- DCP office
- SAPOL
- SA Health
- DHS
- Coroner
- Media report.

Within 24 hours of notification of the death, the Executive Officer will confirm whether it meets the definition of an *adverse incident*.

**Adverse incident** definition is:

- a) The death of a child or young person up to the age of 18 years if one or more of the following applies in relation to the child or young person and their death:
  - i. The child or young person was in the custody, or under the guardianship, of the Chief Executive;
  - ii. The child or young person was the subject of a report under section 31 of the CYPS Act within the period of one year before their death;
  - iii. The child or young person was the subject of a decision by the Chief Executive under the CYPS Act within the period of 1 year before their death;
  - iv. The child was less than 1 year old at the time of their death and before the child was born, the child was the subject of an unborn child report under section 31 of the CYPS Act.

Stillbirths and miscarriages will not be in scope for review.

## 4.2 Determine if a review is required

If the Executive Officer determines the death is an adverse incident:

- upon advice of an adverse incident, the Executive Officer will immediately advise the Chairs and Executive Group
- within 24 business hours following notification of an adverse incident, the Executive Officer will provide written notification to the Executive Group requesting them to identify whether there was any contact by that department with the deceased child or young person subject of the adverse incident within the 12 months prior to their death. Contact includes interactions with a member of the child or young person's family in relation to a matter relevant to the child or young person's safety and wellbeing
- each member of the Executive Group will provide the Executive Officer a high-level summary of that department's contact, and what its involvement was (including referrals to NGOs/ACCOs/ACCHOs) and where appropriate, include a timeline, one business day prior to the initial Executive Group preliminary meeting
- the summary of the family's contact with each agency will be provided by the Executive Officer to Executive Group prior to the preliminary meeting under section 152 of the CYPS Act
- a preliminary meeting of the Executive Group will be convened within seven business days of being advised of the death
- the Executive Group will undertake a review of the information provided to assess whether the matter should proceed to a full review
- should the Executive Group recommend that a matter proceed to a full review, the preliminary meeting will determine the recommended Panel membership and Terms of Reference of the review, based on service provision to the child or young person and their family's involvement with State government and non-government agencies before their death



- a briefing will be prepared by the Executive Officer to advise the DCP Chief Executive of the recommendation of the Executive Group, and the DCP Chief Executive may then confirm the decision and appoint a Panel
- should the Executive Group determine that there is limited systemic value in appointing a Panel and undertaking a full review of the adverse incident, the Executive Officer will prepare a briefing for the DCP Chief Executive, outlining the rationale for the recommendation not to undertake a full review. The DCP Chief Executive may then confirm the decision not to proceed to a full review.

The Executive Group comprises of the following members:

Agency	Position	Membership
DCP	Chief Practitioner	Chair or Co-chair for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people
DCP	Executive Director, Aboriginal Policy and Services	Co-chair for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people
Public Sector	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative	Executive Member for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people
DHS	Executive Director, Child and Family Support	Executive Member
DHW	Executive Director, Child Health Policy Unit	Executive Member
DCP	Practice Leader (Adverse Events)	Executive Member
DCP	Senior Program Officer, Interagency Child Death Review Panel	Executive Officer (non-voting)

### 4.3 Appoint a Panel

If the Executive Group recommends proceeding to a full review, the Executive Officer will submit a briefing to the DCP Chief Executive recommending a Panel, with consideration for membership, including agency, service provider and cultural representation. An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representative will provide cultural authority and insight for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander reviews. Membership may also include CALD representation where relevant. The Executive Group will recommend the Terms of Reference for each review, which will then be determined by the delegate.

**Terms of Reference** refers to the intended depth and breadth of the review. The time period refers to how far back an agency will go in exploring its involvement with the child or young person. For example, an agency may review the last 12 months of its involvement or longer if this provides a greater opportunity for learning.

The DCP Chief Practitioner will Chair a Panel for non-Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people and a Panel will be Co-Chaired with the Executive Director, Aboriginal Policy and Services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people. The role of the Chairs is to ensure



efficient organisation and conduct of a Panel's function and for the briefing of all members in relation to issues arising at Panel meetings.

The Executive Panel may also recommend extending membership to other relevant government agencies who were involved with the child or young person subject to the adverse incident. The DCP Chief Executive will appoint a Panel via the Executive Officer.

In addition to the Executive Group, Panel membership may also include the following members for reviews in which that department was involved with the child, young person, or their family, before their death:

Agency	Position	Membership
SAPOL	Officer in Charge Family and Domestic Violence Section	Nominated Member
DE	Director, Student Support Services, Support and Inclusion Division	Nominated Member
DCS	Executive Director, Office for Correctional Services Review	Nominated Member
DCP	Practice Leader (Multicultural)	Nominated Member
SAHT	Senior Policy Officer, Reform	Nominated Member

Following the appointment of a Panel, the first Panel meeting will be convened within ten business days of the appointment. The Executive Officer will ask relevant government agencies to provide a high-level summary of the child or young person's involvement, or lack of, with that department for the agreed period prior to their death within five business days of the request.

The Executive Officer will create a high-level timeline of service delivery received by the deceased child or young person, based on information provided in the summary documents which will be distributed to Panel members at least five business days before the first Panel meeting.

The Chairs will provide written advice to the Presiding Member of the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee (CDSIRC) through the CDSIRC Executive Officer of the intent to conduct a review.

#### 4.4 Methodology of Panel review

The review will be comprehensive and include analysis of relevant government and non-government agency records and key documents, as well as analysis by the appointed Panel members with appropriate experience and expertise. The Panel will address the matters sent out in the approved Terms of Reference.

#### 4.5 Panel meetings

A Panel should first convene within ten business days following appointment of a Panel. A Panel will convene in a timely manner on at least two occasions following appointment by the DCP Chief Executive. A Panel may convene on additional occasions to finalise the review or to monitor progress against recommendations.

At the first Panel meeting, members will discuss a prepared timeline of the deceased child or young person's experience of service provision by relevant government agencies and non-government service providers, or lack of, with the purpose to identify system, practice, process and/or policy opportunities for interagency learning.



The Panel will begin to develop findings and observations and develop recommendations to be incorporated into a report. A Panel must not make any findings or draw conclusions relating to civil or criminal liability. The Chairs are responsible for final decision making if there is disagreement. A Panel will determine whether a second Panel meeting is necessary prior to the written reports being prepared, and whether a third Panel meeting will be required to complete the review.

The second (or third) Panel meeting will provide members an opportunity to discuss and endorse a written report as described in the Reporting section of this procedure.

#### **4.5.1 Quorum**

A quorum for any Panel meetings to proceed is not less than 100% of all Executive Panel members, including the Chairs. If a quorum is not achieved, the Panel meeting will be rescheduled within the next 24 hours to enable members to attend.

#### **4.5.2 Proxies**

If a Panel member is unable to attend a panel meeting, they can appoint a proxy. Proxies are permitted to attend meetings if the person has decision making delegation, relevant to the Panel. Panel members are responsible for providing a full brief to proxies, prior to their attendance at any meetings.

#### **4.5.3 Decision making**

A collaborative approach to resolving issues will always be preferred, however in the absence of reaching unanimous decision(s) by members, the Chairs will be responsible for conflict resolution and/or final decision-making.

#### **4.5.4 Records of meetings**

The Executive Officer will be responsible for scheduling Panel meetings, recording key actions, timelines and decisions, as well as preparing the agenda, minutes, action register and report(s). All meetings will be transcribed for the purposes of meeting minutes.

### **4.6 Reporting**

At the conclusion of each review, the Executive Officer will prepare a report that contains:

- a description of the adverse incident
- a description of any processes that, in the opinion of the Panel, may have caused or contributed to the adverse incident
- opportunities for learning and improvement in the provision of services
- the recommendations of the Panel
- any other information considered relevant by the Panel.



This report is strictly confidential and may only be shared with:

- participating Panel members
- the Minister for Child Protection
- the Chief Executive (DCP)
- the Chief Executives of participating Panel members
- the Ministers of Departments of participating Panel members
- expert, technical, administrative, or secretarial support personnel of the Panel.

The reports will be distributed to Panel members at least one week prior to the final Panel meeting for discussion and endorsement.

Following Panel endorsement, the Executive Officer will finalise the report and seek endorsement from the Panel Chairs out of session. Following endorsement, the Executive Officer will provide the reports to the Chief Executive (delegate) for noting and distribution to relevant Panel members, Chief Executives and Ministers.

All written documents submitted to a Panel that include information about deceased children or young people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander must have a cultural protocol warning coversheet attached. Any deceased Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander individual is referred to by their initials and any mention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Business is done so sensitively and respectfully and in the pursuit of continuous improvement opportunities.

#### 4.7 Monitoring recommendations

Agencies are responsible for implementing and monitoring recommendations relevant to their agency and reporting progress to a Panel in a timely manner.

The Executive Officer will maintain a recommendation register with allocated lead agencies and specified timeframes.

The Executive Officer will be responsible for coordinating quarterly meetings to review outstanding recommendations and update panel members with progress against each.

### 5. Compliance, monitoring and evaluation

This procedure will be reviewed every three years by the DCP Office of Professional Practice in conjunction with Executive Panel members, or as required.

### 6. Related documents

Related documents, forms and templates

[Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)



## Document control

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